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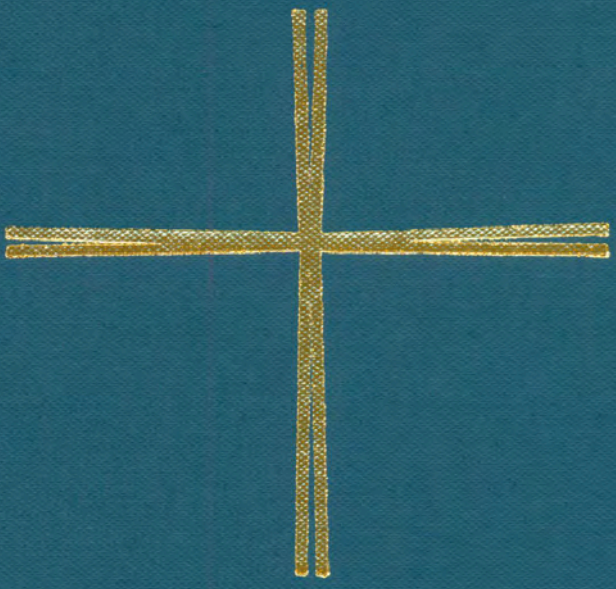

Sacraments and Sacramentals

ANSCAR J. CHUPUNGCO

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IV

Sacraments and Sacramentals

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Sacraments and Sacramentals

ANSCAR J. CHUPUNGCO, O.S.B.

EDITOR

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Introduction

The Constitution on the Liturgy devotes an entire chapter to the sacraments and sacramentals. Article 59 recalls that "the purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the Body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God; but being signs they also have a teaching function." Sacraments sanctify, they build the ecclesial community, they are acts of worship, and they teach the faithful. To fully obtain their effects, the faithful should receive the sacraments with faith and understanding. With faith, because as "sacraments of faith" they presuppose and at the same time nourish the faith of those who receive them. With understanding, because they consist of signs by which their nature and purpose are manifested.

In article 60 the Constitution teaches that "the Church has, in addition, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs bearing a kind of resemblance to the sacraments: they signify effects, particularly of a spiritual kind, that are obtained through the Church's intercession. They dispose people to receive the chief effects of the sacraments." The idea of treating the sacraments and sacramentals together in one chapter is to show the relationship between them. Sacramentals resemble the sacraments, lead to them, and dispose the faithful to receive them fruitfully.

In article 61 the Constitution concludes that for the faithful "the effect of the liturgy of sacraments and sacramentals is that almost every event in their lives is made holy by divine grace that flows from the paschal mystery." Indeed, the use of material things in the liturgy shows that the cosmos created by God can be directed toward human sanctification and divine praise. In all this the paschal mystery stands forth as the "fount from which all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power."

The rest of the chapter spells out the plan of the Council for the revision of the rites of sacraments and sacramentals in order to make their nature and purpose clearer to the people of today and to indicate

where adaptations to the needs of our time should be made. In less than thirty years after the Council, most of the rites for sacraments and sacramentals have been revised.

To appreciate the revised rites, it is necessary to study the sacraments and sacramentals from the perspectives that influenced the postconciliar reform. These are theology, history, and pastoral considerations. The present volume, whose primary aim is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature and purpose of sacraments and sacramentals, leads the reader to a more critical appreciation of what the Council had decreed and what the postconciliar reform has implemented.

This fourth volume opens with a review of the basic liturgical notion of sacraments and sacramentals. The seven sacraments are then examined according to their classical order: Christian initiation, comprising the catechumenate, baptism, confirmation, and first Eucharist; reconciliation; the care and anointing of the sick; holy orders and liturgical ministries; and marriage. Next are the sacramentals, namely, monastic and religious profession; consecration of virgins; funeral rites; and the various blessings . The Constitution on the Liturgy does not includes in its list the dedication of churches, which is treated by this handbook in the chapter on liturgical time and space.

The sacraments and sacramentals are, when possible, first studied according to their earliest known form. This takes us back to the celebrations of the first four centuries, which, in liturgical tradition, carry much authority as models for subsequent historical periods. After the fourth century the treatment is divided between the East and the West. The latter, though focused on the Roman liturgy, does not ignore the non-Roman West.

In the case of the Oriental liturgies, effort is made to reconstruct their historical development and to describe their plan and particular traits. The aim is to offer the Western readers a more integral concept of how the East celebrates the sacraments and sacramentals. The Roman liturgy, on the other hand, is studied with greater stress on the theology and pastoral concerns projected by its rites and formularies. Where opportune, as for example in the case of confirmation, questions are raised about various pastoral implications of the postconciliar reform.

This volume, to which several experts have contributed, is necessarily a mosaic of various interests, emphases, and theological

interpretations. However, the mosaic is a faithful representation of what the Church believes and proclaims when it celebrates the sacraments of faith and the sacramentals.

Anscar J. Chupungco, O.S.B.
Editor

Abbreviations

A	*Ambrosius.* Milan, 1925–.
AA	Vatican II, decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People). *AAS* 58 (1966) 837–864; Abbott, 489–521; Flannery, 766–798.
AAS	*Acta Apostolicae Sedis.* Rome, 1909–.
AB	Analecta Bollandiana. Brussels, 1882–.
Abbott	Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed. *The Documents of Vatican II.* New York, 1966.
ACC	Alcuin Club Collections. London, 1899–.
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers. New York, 1946–.
A.Dmitr	A. Dmitrievskij. *Opisanie liturgiceskich rukopisej hransjascihsja v bibliotekach pravoslavnago Vostoka,* 2 vols. Kiev, 1895, 1902.
AG	Vatican II, decree *Ad gentes* (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity). *AAS* 58 (1966) 947–990; Abbott, 584–630; Flannery, 813–856.
AGreg	Analecta Gregoriana. Rome, 1930–.
AL	Analecta liturgica. Rome (see SA).
ALW	*Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft.* Regensburg, 1950–. Supersedes *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft.* Münster, 1921–1941.
Anàmnesis	*Anàmnesis: Introduzione storico-teologica alla liturgia.* Edited by the professors at the Pontificio Istituto Liturgico S. Anselmo, Rome, under the direction of S. Marsili and others. Casale Monferrato, 1974ff. Vol. 1, *La liturgia: Momento nella storia della salvezza.* 2nd ed. Genoa, 1979. Vol. 2, *La liturgia: Panorama storico generale.* Genoa, 1978. Vol. 3/1, *La liturgia: I sacramenti. Teologia e storia della celebrazione.* 3rd ed. Genoa, 1992. Vol. 3/2: *La liturgia eucaristica: Teologia e storia della celebrazione.* Genoa, 1989. Vol. 5, *Liturgia delle ore.* Genoa, 1990. Vol. 6, *L'anno liturgico: Storia, teologia e celebrazione.* 3rd ed. Genoa, 1992. Vol. 7, *I sacramentali e le benedizioni.* Genoa, 1989.
ASE	*Annali di storia dell'esegesi.* Bologna.
AST	*Analecta sacra Tarraconensia.* Barcelona, 1925–.

BA	Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Oeuvres de S. Augustin. Paris, 1949–.
BAR	S. Parenti and E. Velkovska, *L'eucologio Barberini gr.* 336 (BELS 80). Rome, 1995.
BEL	Bibliotheca Ephemerides liturgicae. Rome, 1932–.
BELS	Bibliotheca Ephemerides liturgicae Subsidia. Rome, 1975–.
Bugnini	A. Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy: 1948–1975.* Collegeville, Minn., 1990.
ButLitEc	*Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique.* Toulouse, 1899–1936.
CAO	*Corpus antiphonalium officii.* Rome, 1963–1979.
CBL	Collectanea biblica Latina. Rome.
CCC	*Catechism of the Catholic Church.* Vatican City, 1994.
CCL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Turnhout, 1954–.
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout, 1971–.
CL	*Communautés et liturgies.* Ottignies, Belgium.
CLLA	*Codices liturgici Latini antiquiores.* Freiburg/Schweiz, 1968.
CNRS	Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques.
Conc	*Concilium.* Paris, 1965–.
CP	Martimort, A.-G., ed. *The Church at Prayer*. 4 vols. Collegeville, Minn., 1986–1987; one vol. ed., 1992.
CPG	*Clavis Patrum Graecorum.* Turnhout, 1974–.
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna, 1886.
CSIC	Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas. Madrid, 1940–1941.
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archeologie chrétienne et liturgie.* Paris, 1907–1953.
DB	*Rituale Romanum, De benedictionibus* (Kaczynski). Vatican City, 1984.
DCA	*Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum.* Ed. F. Funk. Paderborn, 1905; reprint Turin, 1962.
DMP	*Directorium de Missis cum pueris (Directory for Masses with Children).* Vatican City, 1973. *EDIL* 1, ##3115–3169, pp. 968–980; *DOL* 276.
DOL	International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal and Curial Texts.* Collegeville, Minn., 1982.
DPAC	*Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane.* 3 vols. Casale Monferrato, 1983–1988.
DS	H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum.* 32nd ed. Freiburg, 1963.
DSp	*Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique.* Paris, 1932–.

DSPB	*Dizionario di spiritualità biblico-patristica.* Turin, 1993.
DV	Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Dei verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation). *AAS* 58 (1966) 817–835; Abbott, 111–128; Flannery, 750–765.
EDIL 1	*Enchiridion documentorum instaurationis liturgicae* 1 (1963–1973). Ed. R. Kaczynski. Turin, 1976.
EDIL 2	*Enchiridion documentorum instaurationis liturgicae* 2 (1973–1983). Ed. R. Kaczynski. Rome, 1988.
EO	*Ecclesia Orans.* Rome, 1984–.
EP 1961	A.-G. Martimort, ed. *L'Église en prière: Introduction à la liturgie.* Paris, 1961. English text: *The Church at Prayer.* 4 vols. Collegeville, Minn., 1986–1987.
EP 1983	A.-G. Martimort, ed. *L'Église en prière,* Paris, 1983. English text: *The Church at Prayer.* 4 vols. Collegeville, Minn., 1986–1987.
EphLit	*Ephemerides liturgicae*. Rome, 1887–.
EstTrin	*Estudios trinitarios.*
FCh	Fontes Christiani. Freiburg–New York, 1990–.
Flannery	Austin Flannery, O.P., ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents.* Collegeville, Minn., 1975; rev. ed., 1992.
FOP	Faith and Order Papers. Geneva.
FS	Festschrift.
GaF	*Missale Francorum*
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Leipzig.
GE	Vatican II, declaration *Gravissimum educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education). Vatican City, 1965. Abbott, 637–651; Flannery, 725–737.
GeG	*Sacramentarium Gellonensis.*
GeV	*Sacramentarium Gelasianum Vetus*.
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal *(Institutio generalis Missalis Romani).* 4th ed. Vatican City, 1969, 1975. *DOL* 208.
GLNT	*Grande lessico del nuovo testamento.*
GrH	*Sacramentarium Gregorianum Hadrianum*.
GrS	*Sacramentarium Gregorianum Supplementum.*
GS	Vatican II, constitution *Gaudium et spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). *AAS* 58 (1966) 1025–1120; Abbott, 199–308; Flannery, 903–1001.
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society. London, 1891–.
HDG	*Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte.*
HGK	*Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte.*

HJ	*Heythrop Journal.* Oxford, 1960–.
HS	*Hispania sacra.* Madrid, 1948–.
IEHE	*Instituto español de historia eclesiástica.* Rome.
IGMR	*Institutio generalis Missalis Romani* (General Instruction of the Roman Missal). Vatican City, 1969, 1975. *EDIL* 1, ##1381–1736, pp. 469–546; *DOL* 208.
IGLH	*Institutio generalis Liturgiae Horarum* (General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours). Vatican City, 1971. *DOL* 426.
Irén	*Irénikon.* Chevetogne, 1926–.
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum.* Münster, 1958–.
JLw	*Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft.* Münster, 1921–1941, 1973–1979.
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies.* London, 1900–1905; Oxford, 1906–1949; n.s., Oxford, 1950–.
Jungmann	J. A. Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia.* 2 vols. Casale Monferrato, 1963. English translation: *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development.* Trans. F. Brunner. Christian Classics. Westminster, Md., 1986. Originally published New York, 1951–1955.
KB	*Katechetische Blätter.* Munich, 1875–.
Lat	*Lateranum.* Rome, 1919–.
LeV	*Lumière et vie.* Lyons, 1951–.
LG	Vatican II, dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church). *AAS* 57 (1965) 5–71; Abbott, 14–96; Flannery, 350–423.
Lit	*Liturgia.* Rome, n.s., 1967ff.
LJ	*Liturgisches Jahrbuch.* Münster, 1951–.
LL	A. Nocent, "I libri liturgici." *Anàmnesis* 2: *La liturgia: Panorama storico generale.*
LO	Lex Orandi. Paris, 1944–.
LQF	Liturgie- (until 1957: geschichtliche) wissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen. Münster, 1909–1940; 1957–.
LThK	*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche.* Freiburg, 1957–1965.
LV	*Lumen vitae.* Brussels, 1946–.
*MA*1981	*Missale Ambrosianum.* Iuxta ritum sanctae Ecclesiae Mediolanensis. Ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum. Milan, 1981; new ed. 1990.
Mansi	J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio.* 31 vols. Florence–Venice, 1757–1798; reprinted and continued by L. Petit and J. B. Martin, 53 vols. in 60. Paris, 1889–1927; reprinted Graz, 1960–.
MD	*La Maison-Dieu.* Paris, 1945–.

MEL	Monumenta Ecclesiae liturgica. Paris, 1890–1912.
MelScRel	*Mélanges de science religieuse.* Lille, 1944–.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica. Berlin, 1826.
MHS	Monumenta Hispaniae sacra. Madrid, 1946–.
ML	C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources.* Washington, 1986.
*MR*1570	*Missale Romanum* ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum Pii V Pont. Max. iussu editum (various editions; here *Missale Romanum* ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum Summorum Pontificum cura recognitum. Editio XIX iuxta typicam. Turin–Rome, 1961).
*MR*1975	*Missale Romanum* ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum. Editio typica. Vatican City, 1970; 2nd editio typica, 1975. English text: *The Sacramentary.* Trans. International Committee on English in the Liturgy. Collegeville, Minn., 1973, 1985.
MS	*Medieval Studies*. Toronto–London, 1938–.
MuS	*Musicam sacram. EDIL 1,* ##733–801, pp. 275–291; *DOL* 508.
NBA	Nuova biblioteca Agostiniana. Rome.
NDL	*Nuovo dizionario di liturgia.* Rome, 1984.
NHL	*Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft.* Frankfurt-am-Main.
Not	*Notitiae.* Vatican City, 1965–.
NRT	*Nouvelle revue théologique.* Louvain, 1869–.
OB	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo benedictionum.* Vatican City, 1984.
OBP	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo baptismi parvulorum.* Vatican City, 1969, 1973.
OC	*Ordo confirmationis.* Vatican City, 1971.
OCA	Orientalia christiana analecta. Rome, 1935–.
OCM	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo celebrandi matrimonium.* Vatican City, 1969.
OCP	*Orientalia christiana periodica.* Rome, 1935–.
OCV	*Ordo consecrationis virginum.* Vatican City, 1970.
ODEA	Pontificale Romanum, *Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae et altaris.* Vatican City, 1977.
OE	Vatican II, decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches). *AAS* 57 (1965) 76–89; Abbott, 373–386; Flannery, 441–451.
Oe	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo exsequiarum.* Vatican City, 1969.
OICA	Rituale Romanum, *Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum.* Vatican City, 1972; rev. ed. 1974.
OKS	*Ostkirchliche Studien.* Würzburg, 1952–.

OLM	*Ordo lectionum Missae.* Editio typica, Vatican City, 1969. 2nd editio typica, Vatican City, 1981. *EDIL* 2, ##4057–4181, pp. 337–370; English text: *Lectionary for Mass.* Collegeville, Minn., 1970, 1981, 1998.
OM	Order of Mass *(Ordo Missae).* Vatican City, 1969.
OP	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo paenitentiae.* Vatican City, 1974.
OPR	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo professionis religiosae.* Vatican City, 1970; rev. ed. 1975.
OR	*Ordines Romani.*
OS	*L'Orient syrien.* Paris, 1956–1967.
OSA	Opera Sancti Augustini
OUI	*Rituale Romanum, Ordo unctionis infirmorum.* Vatican City, 1972.
PatOr	Patrologia Orientalis. Paris, 1901–.
PCS	*Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*. In *The Rites of the Catholic Church.* New York, 1983[2].
PDOC	*Petit dictionnaire de l'Orient chrétien.*
PG	J. P. Migne, Patrologia cursus completus: Series Graeca. Paris, 1857–1866.
PGD	*Pontificale Guglielmi Durandi* (Pontifical of William Durandus)
Ph	*Phase: Revista de pastoral liturgica.* Barcelona, 1961–.
PL	J. P. Migne, Patrologia cursus completus: Series Latina. Paris, 1844–1855.
PO	Vatican II, *Presbyterorum ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests). *AAS* 58 (1966) 990–1024; Abbott, 532–576; Flannery, 863–902.
PR	Pontificale Romanum (M. Andrieu, ed. *Le Pontifical Romain au moyen âge*, vol. 1, *Pontifical Romain du XIIe siècle.* ST 86. Vatican City, 1939; reprint 1984.
PRG	*Pontificale Romano-Germanicum* (Romano-German Pontifical)
QL	*Questions liturgiques.* Louvain, 1910–.
QLP	*Les questions liturgiques et paroissiales.* Louvain, 1919–1969.
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum.* Stuttgart, 1950–.
RB	Rule of Benedict *(Regula Benedicti).*
RBib	*Revue biblique.* Paris, 1892–.
RBén	*Revue bénédictine.* Maredsous, 1884–.
RCT	*Revista catalana de teología.* Barcelona, 1976–.
RED	Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta. Rome, 1954.
RET	*Revista Española de teología.* Madrid, 1940–.
Rev Lit	*Revue de liturgie e monastique.* Maredsous, 1911–1940.
RG	*Revue grégorienne.* Paris, 1911–.
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique.* Louvain, 1900–.

Righetti	*Manuale di storia liturgica.* Vol. 1 (2nd ed., 1950); vol. 2 (2nd ed., 1955); vol. 3 (1949); vol. 4 (1953). Milan.
RL	*Rivista liturgica.* Praglia-Finalpia, 1914–.
RM	Rule of the Master *(Regula Magistri).*
RPL	*Rivista di pastorale liturgica.* Brescia, 1963.
RSPT	*Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques.* Paris, 1907–.
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*. Paris, 1910–.
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale.* Louvain.
SA	Studia Anselmiana. Rome, 1933–.
SAEMO	*Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera*.
SC	Vatican II, constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). *AAS* 56 (1964) 97–138; Abbott, 137–178; Flannery, 1–36.
ScC	*Scuola cattolica.* Milan, 1873–.
SCA	Studies in Christian Antiquity. Washington, 1941–.
SCh	Sources chrétiennes. Paris, 1941–.
SE	*Sacris erudiri.* Steenbruge, 1948–.
SF	Spicilegium Friburgense. Fribourg, 1957.
SFS	Spicilegii Friburgensis Subsidia.
SL	*Studia liturgica.* Rotterdam, 1962.
ST	Studi e testi. Vatican City, 1900–.
StudPad	*Studia patavina.* Padua, 1954.
ThRv	*Theologische Revue.* Münster, 1902–.
ThS	*Theological Studies.* Woodstock, 1940–.
TQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift.* Tübingen, 1819–.
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie.* Berlin, 1947–.
TS	*Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental*
TTZ	*Trierer theologische Zeitschrift.* Trier, 1945–.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur. Berlin, 1882–.
TuA	Texte und Arbeite. Beuron, 1917–.
UR	Vatican II, decree *Unitatis redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism). *AAS* 57 (1965) 90–112; Abbott, 341–366; Flannery, 452– 470.
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae.* Amsterdam, 1947–.
Ve	*Sacramentarium Veronense.*
ViSpi	*Vie spirituelle.* Paris, 1947–.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen, 1950.
Wor	*Worship.* Collegeville, Minn., 1951–. Formerly *Orate Fratres,* 1926–1951.
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.* Berlin, 1881–.

ZKTh	*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie.* Vienna and Innsbruck, 1877–.
ZRG RA	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte (Romantische Abteilung)*. Weimar.

Anscar J. Chupungco, O.S.B.

Sacraments and Sacramentals

INTRODUCTION

The study of the sacraments from a liturgical point of view presupposes the basic doctrine of the Church concerning their essential components, institution by Christ, number, scope and purpose, efficacy, ministration by the Church, and the requirements for celebration and reception.[1] Something similar can be said of the liturgical study of sacramentals. It too presupposes the corresponding doctrine about their nature, institution by the Church, and efficacy.[2] These points are the subject of systematic theology, but they influence the liturgical understanding of the sacraments and sacramentals.

The liturgical study of sacraments and sacramentals focuses on the aspect of celebration and ritual action. In the past, theology treatises tended to present the sacraments and sacramentals from a doctrinal more than from a ritual perspective. The other extreme had been to deal with them from a purely rubrical consideration. Theology meant dogma, while liturgy meant rubrics. While rubrics are part of the ritual action, they do not represent the totality of a liturgical celebration that includes both doctrine and spirituality, which are projected by the various components of the ritual action. Thus when sacraments and sacramentals are spoken of as celebration, there is an interplay between preaching and praying, between faith and ritual action, between the ecclesial community and the individual faithful.

In other words, there is no dichotomy between doctrine and celebration. The classical axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi* is in fact reversible.[3] While *lex orandi* determines the content of *lex credendi,* this in turn

[1] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City, 1994), nos. 1130–1134.

[2] *CCC,* nos. 1667–1679.

[3] P. de Clerck: "Lex orandi, lex credendi. Sens originel et avatars historiques d'un adage équivoque, *QL* 59 (1978) 193–212. On the question of *locus theologicus,* see A. Triacca, "Liturgia locus theologicus o theologia locus liturgicus? Da un dilemma verso una sintesi," *Paschale Mysterium,* SA 91 (Rome, 1986) 193–233.

influences the shape of *lex orandi.* The history of the sacrament, especially baptism, Eucharist, and marriage, shows how liturgical formularies have been influenced by doctrine.[4] On the other hand, when the Church celebrates the sacraments and sacramentals, it preaches its faith, it proclaims what it officially holds as part of its belief. It should not come as a surprise, then, that Church authorities have been always on guard against liturgical formularies that do not bear the stamp of ecclesiastical approval. The movement from spontaneity and improvisation to fixed liturgical texts in the fourth century was a measure to ward off heresy from the *lex orandi* of the Church.[5]

SACRAMENTS

Sacraments were instituted to be celebrated. They are by their nature and purpose celebrations of the Church. As such, they are liturgical rites consisting of proclaimed texts, gestures and symbols, and often material things. Through the performance of such liturgical elements, the Church explains, recalls, and reaffirms the contents of the *lex orandi.* The contents are summed up by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church:* "The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required disposition."[6] The Catechism explains *ex opere operato* in terms of sacramental efficaciousness: "The Father always hears the prayer of his Son's Church which, in the epiclesis of each sacrament, expresses her faith in the power of the Spirit."[7] The Catechism reaffirms the teaching that "the Church celebrates the sacraments as a priestly community structured by the baptismal priesthood and the priesthood of ordained ministers." Furthermore, it stresses the place of the word of God in the sacramental system and notes that the fruit of sacramental life is both personal and ecclesial in its dimension.[8]

[4] Examples are the explicit mention of original sin in the prayer of exorcism (*Rite of Baptism for Children,* nos. 49 and 221), the quotations from Pius IX's dogmatic definition present in the formularies of the Immaculate Conception *(MR1975),* and the doctrine of indissolubility and procreation in Preface A for marriage *(MR1975).*

[5] A. Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula* (Washington, 1981) 89–215.

[6] *CCC,* no. 1131; see S. Marsili, "Sacramenti," *NDL* 1271–1285.

[7] *CCC,* no. 1127.

[8] *CCC,* nos. 1132–1134.

To this traditional understanding of sacraments one should add by way of supplement the teaching of *SC* 7, 59, and 61: Christ, who is always present in the Church, associates it with himself in his priestly office, so much so that the liturgy is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body which is the Church; he is present in the sacraments, so that when a person baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes; the paschal mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection is the fount from which all sacraments draw their power; the purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the Body of Christ, and to give worship to God; sacraments presuppose faith, but they also nourish and express it through rites; they impart grace, but the very act of celebrating them disposes the faithful to receive this grace; together with sacramentals, they make holy by divine grace almost every event in the faithful's life; there is hardly any proper use of material things that cannot be directed toward sanctification and the praise of God.

It is important to note that *SC* and the postconciliar reform of the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals have given a rightful place to the proclamation of the word of God. Sacraments are "sacraments of faith," because they presuppose faith and at the same time also nourish, strengthen, and express it (*SC* 59). The Church preaches faith in order to prepare the believers for the sacraments. We are told, however, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word of Christ (see Rom 10:17). That is why no sacrament is integrally celebrated without the word of God except in the case of emergency baptism.

These are the doctrinal contents of the *lex credendi* that the Church preaches when it celebrates the sacraments. The celebration itself is composed of different elements. The kind of assembly gathered together; the role of the ministers; the reading of scriptural and eucho-logical texts; the use of gestures and symbols like immersion, anoint-ing, and laying of hands; the employment of material objects like water, bread, wine, and oil; the occasion and place for the celebration; and music, furnishings, and the arts with which these rites are expressed—all these elements of the celebration are the totality of the *lex orandi,* and they constitute the outward liturgical shape of the *lex credendi.* Each of them says something about the nature, purpose, and efficacy of Christ's mystery present in the sacraments. Each unfolds in its own way the Church's doctrine on the sacraments.

This implies that the study of the sacraments should not be confined to the concepts of "matter and form," the pronouncements of the magisterium, and the requirements for valid and licit administration. Sacraments are ritual actions involving all the above. They cannot be understood in their integrity without the liturgical components whereby they are celebrated. A minimalistic approach to the sacraments impoverishes theology, spirituality, and pastoral care.

The liturgical elements for the celebration are the primary source materials for the study of the sacraments. For this reason the study of liturgy should include historical research on the development of sacramental rites, textual analysis and hermeneutics, examination of the meaning of gestures and symbols, and consideration of the time and space for celebration.[9] The step thereafter is to compare the result of such study with the pronouncements of the magisterium and the findings of theology. This leads to the institution of a dialogue between practice and doctrine.

The classical number of the sacraments, after the Council of Florence (1439–1445), is seven: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, holy orders, and marriage. The Catechism classifies them under three headings: sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, confirmation, Eucharist), sacraments of healing (penance and anointing of the sick), and sacraments at the service of the communion and mission of the faithful (holy orders and marriage).[10] It should be noted that liturgical study treats the Eucharist under two principal aspects: as the Sunday celebration of a community and as the culmination of Christian initiation. Other celebrations of the Eucharist are for particular occasions in connection with the sacraments and sacramentals (ritual Masses) and Viaticum.

SACRAMENTALS

SC 60 offers an integral definition of sacramentals: "The Church has instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs bearing a kind of resemblance to the sacraments: they signify effects, particularly of a spiritual kind, that are obtained through the Church's intercession. They dispose people to receive the chief effect of the sacraments and

[9] J. Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Christian Church* (London, 1981); D. Power, *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy* (New York, 1984).

[10] *CCC,* no 1211.

they make holy various occasions in human life."[11] To this we should add the teaching of *SC* 61 that sacramentals, like the sacraments, draw their power from the paschal mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

According to the Catechism, sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, states of life, circumstances in Christian life, and the use of things helpful to people. But they can also respond to other particular needs, culture, and history of a given region. Their celebration "always includes a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water."[12] Sacramentals are distinguished from sacraments by their institution and effect. The Catechism explains that "sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it."[13] The classical distinction between *opus operatum* and *opus operantis (Ecclesiae)* is obviously being invoked here.

A number of observations on the preceding statements are helpful. Like the sacraments to which they bear a kind of resemblance, sacramentals are celebrated as liturgical acts. Cipriano Vagaggini names their chief effects: first, actual grace and by means of it the recovery or increase of sanctifying grace; second, the prevention of diabolical influence on persons and things; and third, temporal graces with a view to the spiritual good of the person.[14] The doctrine on *opus operantis* means that when sacramentals are celebrated, the intercessory role of the Church is signified and realized. Because of the Church's union with Christ, who is its head, God accepts the Church's prayer.[15] We may say that the value and efficacy of the Church's intercessory prayer rest ultimately upon Christ's priestly prayer. Because of his union with the Church at worship, Christ "claims" the Church's prayer as his very own. In this sense sacramentals as liturgical celebrations are, like the sacraments, an action of Christ and the Church.

[11] A. Donghi, "Sacramentali," *NDL* 1253–1270.

[12] *CCC,* no. 1668.

[13] Ibid., 1670.

[14] C. Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy,* trans. L. Doyle and W. Jurgens (Collegeville, Minn., 1976) 113.

[15] Ibid., 112–127.

Finally, since sacramentals derive their power from the paschal mystery, we should not hesitate to claim that the liturgy of sacramentals contains and proclaims the death and resurrection of Christ.

Vagaggini distinguishes two types of sacramentals: those that are things and those that are action.[16] Sacramentals that are things remain after the liturgical act has taken place (holy water, candles, ashes, palm branches), while sacramentals that are actions pass with the liturgical act (rite of blessing a home). Similarly, in the realm of sacraments we speak of baptismal water, Eucharistic elements, and consecrated oils as sacraments, although they are not actions but objects. Strictly speaking, sacraments are actions before they are objects.

SC, which takes no notice of sacramentals as objects, has a limited list of sacramentals: blessings in general (*SC* 79), the consecration of virgins and religious profession (*SC* 80), funerals (*SC* 81), and the funeral of infants (*SC* 82). After the Council many other sacramentals were added to the list by the publication of separate rituals: the blessing of abbots and abbesses, the institution of lectors and acolytes, the dedication of a church and an altar, the blessing of oils, the crowning of images of the Blessed Virgin, and the many other blessings contained in the *Book of Blessings.*

As with the sacraments, the word of God holds an important position in the celebration of sacramentals. Since sacramentals lack the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the sacraments, they derive their efficacy from the word of God and the intercession of the Church. This is the reason why the sacramentals, if celebrated outside Mass, should normally include a reading from Scripture. In the case of blessings contained in the *Book of Blessings,* the word of God and the prayer of the Church are considered the essential or constitutive elements.

Sacramentals occupy their allotted place in the economy of salvation. They complete, supplement, or extend the effect of the Eucharist and the sacraments. Furthermore, there is an entire gamut of situations affecting individuals, families, societies, and nations that need the Church's prayer and God's blessing. Some of these are not directly and immediately covered by the sacraments. Religious profession, funerals, the blessing of a new home, the dedication of a parish church—these are some significant turning points in the life of the

[16] Ibid., 88.

faithful. The Church accompanies them not only with the Eucharist and sacraments but also by the celebration of sacramentals.

These, then, are the contents of what the Church preaches when it celebrates the sacramentals: the power of the paschal mystery, its presence in the various circumstances of human life, the maternal role of the Church, and the holiness of God's creation. The liturgical study of sacramentals, like the one for the sacraments, will therefore include the history of their institution and development, the liturgical formularies, and gestures and symbols. The purpose is to discover and appreciate how they project the *lex credendi* and enhance the *lex orandi.*

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Part I

The Sacraments

A. Christian Initiation from Catechumenate to Eucharist

Adrien Nocent, O.S.B.

1

Christian Initiation During the First Four Centuries

INTRODUCTION

The first moments of the Church's life, after the ascension of Christ and the sending of the Spirit, were filled with enthusiasm for the message he had entrusted to all his followers: Baptize and save those who believe, thus continuing John the Baptist's preaching of repentance. We must not expect the earliest writings to contain precise details about the development of Christian initiation, and it would be foolish to attempt to trace the liturgical details of what we call the sacraments of Christian initiation. But the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of Peter and Paul, and the *Didache* offer a profound theology of these sacraments and allude to their conferral without going into the details of their celebration.

Clearer evidence appears in the second century about how those who wished to convert were received into the community. By the beginning of the third century we can observe a precisely detailed organization of the catechumenate and the sacraments of initiation. Some of the Fathers or ecclesiastical writers are already commenting on these things. After the Peace of Constantine we have much basic evidence about the organizational development of Christian initiation in the Roman Church. All this forms the basis for the divisions we have chosen here for our treatment of the subject: the first four centuries; the development of initiation through various political, social, and cultural changes over the centuries until the present; and lastly, problems today.

I. PAGANISM AND JUDAISM

The fact that Christ and the Church chose water as a sign of incorporation into the Savior and into a new life in no way means, as was sometimes said in the late nineteenth century, that this was an imitation of paganism. The term βάπτειν ("baptize") means to immerse, hence to wash, to purify. Washing has a universal meaning; it is significant in itself. The fact that we find it in the most varied settings does not mean that some have borrowed it from others. What is important and distinctive is the meaning attached to the sign. Thus Judaism. In the *Sifre,* a rabbinic commentary on chapters 14–15 of the Book of Numbers, we read that the Israelites were initiated into the covenant after they had been circumcised, after they had crossed the Red Sea and offered sacrifices. The *Sifre* presents us with a very profound theology of this initiation, which for a proselyte (a pagan who is becoming a Jew) consists in entrance into the people of God through the sign of circumcision, the bath, and the paschal sacrifice. All this presupposes prior instruction.[1]

The Qumran documents tell us about the practices of a group of Essenes who had been living a deep spiritual and religious life since the first century B.C. These ascetics may have had something in common with the Hasidim, Jews who rejected Epiphanes' attempts at Hellenization in the third century B.C. This "Community of the Sons of the Covenant" took baths of purification before eating a meal, before speaking with a superior, etc. But above all purification acquired the meaning of conversion, as described in Ezekiel 36. Such purification is the work of God; it will be tested at the time of the messianic visitation, when there will be a purification in the Spirit of holiness. The novice who is to be admitted into the community receives an initial purification, a bath, which is a sign of conversion to the truth. Perhaps these were the rites of initiation practiced by St. John the Baptist.

II. BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT[2]

We would like to pause for a moment to consider the experience and teaching of the Gospels, John in particular, as well as the Acts and the letters of Peter and Paul.

[1] On baths in Hellenism and related bibliography, see A. Oepke, "βάπτω" *GLNT* 11:46–57. For circumcision, see H. Greeven, "περιτομή" *GLNT* 10:46–47.

[2] When using the New Testament, we must remember that in the Greek text the word βαπτισμός refers to the rites of Jewish purification (see Mark 7:4; Heb 9:10),

1. *The Gospels and Acts*

We have already said that we will not dwell on the details, expressions, or descriptions we may find. For example, the Trinitarian formula in Matthew 28:18-19 is meant to show that the baptized is inserted into the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; it is not meant to indicate an already prescribed baptismal formula. We know that in the West baptism was to be administered with a threefold question about belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each time the candidate responds, expressing his or her faith with the words "I believe," and is immersed in the water. The Trinitarian formula still used today does not become part of the Latin rite of baptism until near the end of the seventh century. What we have, then, is a theology of insertion into the Trinity, not a "rubric." If we read the Acts of the Apostles anecdotally, we might be deceived. In fact, we see that in four cases the Spirit is given through the laying on of hands before baptism. There is the case of Cornelius (Acts 10:44), Lydia (Acts 16:15), the prison guard (Acts 16:31-34) and Crispus, the synagogue official (Acts 18:8). It is impossible from these cases to reconstruct a theology of the gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands in connection with baptism.

But of course we must pay attention to the theology that is emerging from these inspired writings. Consider, for example, Mark 16:15-16: "Go . . . proclaim. . . . Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." Even though not everyone believes that these verses were written by the evangelist,[3] they express in a few words the theology of salvation with respect to the mission of the apostles and the Church.

We will restrict ourselves to a few texts that are important for baptism:

The apostles received the baptism of water conferred by John the Baptist. This was first of all a rite of purification, a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. John had said: "I am baptizing you with water; but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). In Acts 1:5 the words of Jesus are a kind of echo of the Baptist's words. Jesus distinguishes the baptism received from John from that

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whereas βάπτισμα means Christian baptism. On the other hand, the Latin text uses the words *baptismus* and *baptisma* without distinction.

[3] Note by J. Huby in the Jerusalem Bible (in fascicles), revised for the third edition by P. Benoît, *L'évangile de saint Marc* (Paris, 1961) 89.

which will be received on the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles is a true baptism; they are immersed in the Spirit. This baptism in the Spirit is described as a completion of Jesus' mission. Thus Christian baptism is linked to the coming of the Spirit as it is to the coming of Jesus. Peter explains in his address that Pentecost is the fulfillment of the promises made by the prophets (Acts 2:16-28). In the apostolic community, baptism of water is conferred "in the name of Jesus" (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; see also 1 Cor 1:13-16; 6:11; Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3). It is not a question of a liturgical formula but of insertion into Jesus, who, sent by the Father, has brought salvation and completes his work by sending the Spirit.

We can find a certain process of evangelization in the Acts of the Apostles. Even though in the case of the eunuch baptized by Philip (Acts 8:26-39) the catechesis was very brief, we can nevertheless see a catechetical plan. For example, in Acts 10:37-43, which must be linked to Paul's sermons (16:31-32; 17:22-31; 19:2-5), everything is centered on the person of Jesus now alive and as salvation. The emphasis is more on this salvation than on a doctrine. The wonders accomplished signify the very presence of Jesus in the community, in the midst of its members (Acts 2:14-19). He is the fulfillment of the prophets (Acts 3:18, 21, 24, 25); he is described as the center of the world (Acts 3:20-21) and its reconstruction in its primordial unity. He is the author of life. Belief in Jesus means acceptance of the message he brought. At the heart of this message is his person, the object of faith. Therefore, to believe means to adhere to Jesus as Lord through radical conversion. This is the necessary condition for admission to baptism (Acts 2:42; 8:12, etc). Reception of baptism is a public liturgical act that expresses faith and concretizes it in the sacrament.

Although liturgical gestures are mentioned, it is not easy, and often not even possible, to determine to which of them the gift of the Spirit is linked: to the water or to the laying on of hands. Perhaps the Spirit is the element that gives the water its sanctifying power, while the laying on of hands confers the Spirit in an explicit manner. We have already stressed the danger of making too precise a distinction.

2. Baptism in the Letters of St. Paul

The central Pauline text on baptism seems to be Romans 6:3-7. It speaks of our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, which takes place *in similitudine* (ὁμοίωμα), as an ontological participation in

a reality present in the form of a sign. The likeness of Jesus' death makes present the reality. The anamnesis of his death is not only a commemoration but an actualization in the Father's eyes, in order that we may remember. Through the sacramental sign we adhere to this reality made present.[4]

Note Paul's appeal to typology in his teaching. He uses the type of the Red Sea to explain baptism's collective aspect. The Exodus shows us how the Red Sea let a people pass, and Paul actualizes the events that constituted the people of God. Christ is the new Moses who leads his people and his body, the Church, in the desert. The water and the cloud strengthen the people for their journey (1 Cor 10:1-2). But it is not enough to have had the cloud or manna in order to be saved; we must have an attitude of faith expressed in deeds. Paul sees circumcision as the image of baptism, since it unites the baptized to the body of the Church (Col 2:11ff.). The baptized receives the Spirit, which is the Spirit of new life (Rom 6:4). Baptism confers a seal, a mark of the Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13) that distinguishes those who have been baptized. All those marked by the Spirit, by the same seal, form one body in the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).[5]

3. Baptism in the First Letter of Peter

The central passage seems to be 3:18-22, in which we find at least a vague memory of the catechesis of that time. Verse 18 is a hymn, a profession of faith in the risen Christ, while verses 19-22 are a fragment of baptismal catechesis in which we note the use of typology. This typological method would be used in the blessing of the water and in the patristic commentaries and should not be seen merely as a way of providing examples and illustrations as an aid to understanding. For Peter and for Paul, the types used are not examples but historical realities (anti-type, sacrament) that lead to the definitive reality they signify.

Three elements are essential: the person of Noah, the flood, baptism. Isaiah had already used the flood as a type (Isa 28:17-19), a reality that foretells a future reality. Just as the waters of the flood destroyed sin

[4] It is not necessary, when Paul speaks of immersion in water, to insist on the liturgical rite supposedly being recalled. Paul intends first of all to present a doctrine of the insertion of the baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ.

[5] There is no basis for understanding these expressions of Paul as if it were "baptism" as such that confers all this. It seems clear that the term "baptism" here means initiation.

and saved Noah and his family, so a new flood will manifest God's judgment, but some will be gratuitously saved (Isa 54:9). Noah stands between two worlds: the old, which has been destroyed, and the new, of which Noah is the "Elder" or founder of a family. As such, Noah prefigures Christ, the firstborn of the new creation and of the remnant of Israel saved by God. The typology can be extended. The ark is the instrument of salvation, and eight people were saved. The Fathers linked these "eight people who were saved" with the "eighth day," the day of Easter. Sunday is a day outside the week. It is the eighth day, the day of the resurrection as well as the final day of Christ's return. But this eighth day is also the first, the day of creation. Baptism would come to be linked to the eighth day and thus is preferably conferred on Sunday. Baptistries would often be eight-sided.[6]

4. *The Sacramental Gospel of John*

The Gospel of John, the last of the Gospels, is valuable because it communicates the Church's lived experience. For the author, baptism and the Eucharist are intimately linked to the events in Jesus' life. It would be hard to maintain that this Gospel is not a catechesis; the author implicitly says so. After his prologue he recounts for us the miracle at Cana, the first performed by Jesus to arouse faith, and at the end of the Gospel he tells us he has chosen, from the events in Jesus' life, those that will arouse faith in the person of Jesus as God's Son and ambassador. The construction of the Gospel along opposing lines is very moving and catechetical. On the one hand, Jesus gradually reveals his divinity and proves it by working miracles; on the other hand, in parallel and in opposition, the more he reveals himself, the more the unbelief of "the Jews" increases.

Perhaps in the evangelist's community there was a group deeply attached to the baptism of John. That would explain his insistence on the clear distinction between the baptism of John and that of Jesus (1:19-34; 3:22-30; 4:1-3). The Baptist himself says that his baptism is inferior to that of Jesus (1:26-27). This statement and the last part of chapter 3, which again notes this opposition between the two baptisms, leads some exegetes to doubt the authenticity of these verses. Perhaps they were not written by the evangelist himself and reflect a

[6] J. Daniélou, *Bible et liturgie,* LO 11 (Paris, 1958) 354–387. The symbolism of the number eight will be used, for example, by Justin in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (G. Archambault, *Dialogue avec Trypho,* text and translation, 2 vols. (Paris, 1909).

difficult situation in the community. Acts 19:1-7 and 18:25 seem to describe a group that has received the baptism of John and is living in opposition to the disciples of Jesus.

On the other hand, the baptism of John mentioned by the synoptics is above all a baptism of repentance. In the Gospel of John it is described as a baptism that foretells another (1:27), namely, baptism in the Spirit, which is often mentioned by John (3:5; 7:37-39; 9:33-34; 20:22). Now that he has clearly established Jesus' identity, John goes into the sacramental theology of baptism.

The account of the meeting with Nicodemus takes place in a context in which Jesus is describing the renewal of the world and humanity. John sees this renewal as an effect of the signs, which presuppose faith. The miracle at Cana takes place in a world completely renewed. The water becomes wine, and the new wine is better than the old. Other meanings can be ascribed to this sign. Human beings, as St. Irenaeus says in his commentary on the Gospel of John, were water and will become wine; the new wine itself, better than the old, foretells the wine of the Eucharistic banquet, which in turn foretells the banquet of the kingdom. One must be reborn (3:1-21). Just as there is new wine, there will also be new water, and those who drink it will never be thirsty again, as Jesus says to the Samaritan woman (4:12-15). There will also be new worship and a new temple (4:21-26). A new kingdom is already being established (4:35-36). But faith is required if the signs are to have their effects (3:16-21). New birth has a special place in John's Gospel: born of water (3:5), born of the flesh (1:3; 3:6), born of God (1:13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7, 18; 5:1).

The Gospel of John is filled with baptismal symbolism that will later be used in the liturgy, either for the Lenten scrutinies or the blessing of the water, etc. For this reason it seems worthwhile to mention here, without commentary, the Johannine passages that are of particular interest for our subject: John 4:10-14 is the conversation with the Samaritan woman, in which we find the rich theme of water; John 5:2-3 refers to the pool in Jerusalem where the sick man is healed by the saving waters; John 7:37-39 speaks of the feast of Tabernacles, in which water plays an important part; John 9:1-41 tells of the healing of the man born blind who goes to wash in the pool of Siloam; John 13:1-20 is the account of the washing of the feet, which suggests the baptism that purifies; John 19:34 mentions the water mixed with blood that flows from the side of Jesus on the cross. All these passages are

fundamental and constitute a rich resource for the theology and liturgy of baptism.

III. BAPTISM IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

1. *The Didache*

This very ancient text, the oldest non-canonical Christian literary document, has two passages that refer to baptism. One important passage, 7:1-4, is devoted specifically to baptism. The other, 9:1–10:7, which deals with the Eucharist, stresses that no one who is not baptized may be admitted to the Eucharist.

In the passage from chapter 7, it seems that only the first verse is from the time of the *Didache:* "As for baptism, baptize in this way: After having said all that precedes, baptize in running water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The rest appears to be later, although it is not without importance.

Before indicating the manner in which to baptize, the Didache presents the doctrine of the "two ways." But perhaps this doctrine should not be linked too closely to baptism, as though it were a baptismal catechesis. Ritually, baptism is conferred by immersion, as the very word "baptize" indicates. This is followed by the Trinitarian formula. Despite what some authors say, we believe that here, as in Matthew 28:19-20, it is a question of insertion into the Persons of the Trinity, of belief in the Gospel which proclaims the Trinity. On the other hand, this Trinitarian formula serves chiefly to distinguish the baptism of Christians from other baptisms, since this insertion is what characterizes Christian baptism.

The rest of the text, which is apparently later, provides that if running water is unavailable, it is possible to baptize in other water, cold or warm. If the candidate cannot be immersed in the water, baptism may be conferred by infusion. It should be noted that the one who baptizes and the candidate fast one or two days before the baptism.

2. *The Odes of Solomon*

These *Odes* were discovered in 1905 by Rendel Harris in a Syriac manuscript. But it seems that the original text was written in Greek and can be dated to the second half of the second century. The forty-two *Odes* are commentaries on the liturgy, especially that of baptism and Easter, by a community of Jewish Christians in Syria.[7]

[7] C. Kannengiesser, *DPAC* 2:2457.

Despite the lyrical nature of these *Odes,* we should remember that they are a mystagogical catechesis. In fact, *Odes* 4, 25,and 36 seem to be a description of the baptismal rites. These catechetical *Odes* refer frequently to the typology that gives the sacrament its deepest meaning and makes it part of salvation history. Three themes in particular are used: the Red Sea,[8] the Temple,[9] and circumcision.[10] This use of typology will later become a commonplace in the catechesis of the Fathers. Thus, for example, the practical act of removing one's clothes before entering the baptismal water takes on a spiritual meaning. The baptized lay aside their clothing of animal skins in order to be clothed anew by the Spirit.[11] The water is the place where Christ struggles against the Dragon.[12] Even today, during Lent, Psalm 90 (91) sings of Christ's victory over the Dragon. In the same *Ode* 22, immersion in the water is seen as a descent into hell and liberation from death. The *Odes* speak of the σφραγίς, or "seal." It is impossible to say exactly whether this seal is linked to baptism or to a special rite, such as the sign of the cross traced upon the baptized.[13]

3. *The Letter of Barnabas*

Despite appearances, this letter is really a treatise, written after the destruction of the Temple, as chapter 16 shows. This excludes any possible identification of this Barnabas with the apostle of the same name.

Chapters 6 and 11 are interesting for our subject. Chapter 6 speaks of the baptized as one who has entered the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey, as having reached paradise and been transformed into a creature of God, a temple of the Spirit. We see the use of Psalm 22 (23), which is to become the classic psalm of Christian initiation. Chapter 11 develops the theme of water and the cross. Especially important is the description of the catechumenate, which is described in terms of the various ages of the Old Testament. In baptism the catechumen has descended into the waters of death, but through the power of the cross has been built on a solid rock and rises to meet the risen Christ.[14] Psalm 1 describes the just as planted like trees near

[8] *Ode* 39, 9–10.
[9] Ibid., 4, 3; 6, 8.
[10] Ibid., 11, 2.
[11] Ibid., 25, 8; see also ibid., 11, 9–10; 15, 8; 21, 2.
[12] Ibid., 22.
[13] Ibid., 8, 16.
[14] *Letter of Barnabas,* 11, 4–5; SCh 172, 160–163.

streams of water. All who have been baptized bear fruit in due season. The neophyte is a temple of God in whom God dwells.[15]

IV. THE FIRST DESCRIPTIONS OF AN ORGANIZED CATECHUMENATE AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

1. *Justin*

All liturgical scholars use Justin's *First Apology* as a source, but most of the bibliography on Justin deals with his philosophy and theology.

Chapters 61 and 62 of the *First Apology,* written in 150, describe the preparation for baptism and the baptism itself. In the *Dialogue with Trypho,* Justin develops a theology of baptism.

Regarding preparation for baptism, we see four points as essential. (1) Believe in the truth of the catechist's teaching. (2) Promise to live according to the commandments. (3) Learn to pray and ask God for the forgiveness of one's sins. (4) Learn to fast. The entire community fasts and prays during this preparation. We note that in the centuries to follow, this discipline will guide the process of Christian initiation.

Justin is reticent as to the content of the ritual. His apology is addressed to a pagan, Antonius Pius, and these things may not be revealed to one who has not been initiated. He writes: "We lead the candidates to a place where there is water, and they are reborn in the same way as we were reborn; that is to say, they are washed in the water in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the whole universe, of our Savior Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit."[16]

Justin calls this washing φωτισμός, because all who receive this teaching are filled with light. Those who are enlightened are washed in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretells the story of Jesus.[17]

Justin develops his theology in the *Dialogue with Trypho.* The first effect of baptism is the forgiveness of sins. But this effect is not mechanical; faith is necessary. Conversion is also required, and the term μετάνοια occurs often in Justin's works. But the forgiveness of sins is the negative effect and is not the only one; in fact, positively speaking,

[15] Ibid., 16, 7–8; SCh 172, 192.

[16] *First Apology,* 61, 2, 3; 10–13. H. Hemmer and P. Lejay, *Textes et documents,* ed. L. Pautigny (Paris, 1904) 126–128, 130.

[17] See also *First Apology,* 61, 3.

baptism is rebirth and illumination. Baptism is also insertion into the community. This is wonderfully expressed in the participation of the baptized in the Eucharistic celebration. From then on, the newly baptized, incorporated into the Christian life, must bear witness to their faith and keep the commandments in order to obtain eternal life.

2. *Irenaeus of Lyons*

Two works of Irenaeus are of interest to us: the *Demonstratio apostolica* and the *Adversus haereses.* The first contains a fragmentary catechesis of Christian initiation as well as a description of the baptismal liturgy with a Trinitarian invocation and mention of the forgiveness of sins. The sacrament confers a seal for eternal life; it is, as it were, a sign of new life in God.[18]

The *Adversus haereses* does not contain a detailed description of the rites, but we do find the outlines of a baptismal catechesis. Forgiveness of sins is one of the effects of baptism. But Irenaeus sees it as a secondary aspect compared with the deification that takes place in the baptized, who become part of the "recapitulation" achieved by Christ. The incarnation of the Word is the basis of the new creation that restores human beings to their original image received at the time of the first creation.[19] The gift of the Spirit restores us to the image of God and confers on us a power that acts in us, body and soul, leading us to become ever more like God.[20] It was Irenaeus who wrote these beautiful words: "Thus, little by little, we become accustomed to receive and to bear God."[21] Baptism gives us a share in the reconstruction of the world, which is moving toward complete fulfillment of the divine plan.[22]

3. *Tertullian*

Tertullian's *De baptismo* is an apologetic work directed against a form of Manicheism that regards matter as evil. Thus the water of baptism is to be prohibited; faith is sufficient and operative.[23] Although this work already contains a wealth of elements, we must also take into

[18] *Demonstratio apostolica,* 3, PatOr, vol. 12, fasc. 5.
[19] *Adv. haer.,* 5, 6, 1; SCh 153, 72–81.
[20] Ibid., 5, 1, 1; 16–21.
[21] Ibid., 5, 8, 1; 92–97.
[22] Ibid., 5, 36, 3; 460–466.
[23] *De baptismo,* CCL 1, 277–295.

account Tertullian's other works, such as *Adversus Marcionem*,[24] *De corona*,[25] and *De carnis resurrectione*.[26]

We can divide the treatise into two major parts: the first includes the symbolism of water (III–VI), a commentary on the rite of baptism (VII–VIII) and the biblical types (IX). The second part deals with certain theological (X–XVI) and disciplinary (XVII–XX) questions.

Since it is impossible to dwell on these texts in detail, we will simply underline a few salient points.

Baptism presupposes preparation on the part of the candidate. Those who receive baptism must pray, fast, keep vigil, confess their sins. The preferred day for baptism is Easter, since we are baptized into the sufferings of Christ. But any time is suitable for baptism. When the bishop is present, he himself baptizes; otherwise a priest or deacon baptizes, but not without the bishop's permission. In case of necessity a layperson may baptize, but (for polemical reasons) not a woman.

During the night of Easter the baptismal water was blessed at dawn. It is the first witness we have to this blessing, on which Tertullian insists for apologetic reasons.

After removing their clothes, the candidates enter the pool, renounce the devil, his empty promises *(pompae)* and his angels.[27] Tertullian tells us what these seductions are: idolatry in all its manifestations, "dignities and worldly honors, festivals, etc."

Next come two rites that are closely linked: immersion and profession of faith. The catechumen responds "I believe" to the bishop's question about belief in each of the divine Persons of the Trinity, and each response is followed by an immersion. The postbaptismal rites follow. The first of these, the anointing, is regarded by Tertullian as "priestly." Then comes the laying on of hands with the invocation of the Spirit. Tertullian does not mention any anointing after this laying on of hands.

In his catechesis Tertullian makes much use of the typology that was already classic. From a theological point of view, we know that Tertullian considers baptism conferred by heretics as invalid, since there is only one Church and one baptism.[28]

[24] *Adversus Marcionem,* CCL 1, 437–726.
[25] *De corona,* CCL 2, 1037–1065.
[26] *De carnis resurrectione (De resurrectione mortuorum),* CCL 2, 921–1012.
[27] *De corona,* 13; CCL 1, 1062.
[28] *De baptismo,* 15, 2; CCL 1, 290.

4. *The* Traditio Apostolica, *Attributed to Hippolytus of Rome*

The *Traditio Apostolica,* which seems to have been written in the year 217 (although there are doubts about the author and unity of the text), is the first document to give detailed descriptions of the catechumenate and the rites of Christian initiation with their associated prayers. In any case, we should remember that this document does not report the liturgy of Rome, but rather a liturgy that is anxious to follow the ancient liturgy, a fact that may allow us to trace the practices mentioned to a period earlier than the book itself.

The description of the catechumenate reveals the concerns of a strict pastor who regards sound formation in the Church's faith and discipline as absolutely necessary in his day, which is a time of persecutions. Two groups of catechumens are distinguished. Catechumens in the strict sense are under instruction for three years; the elect, after careful examination of their conduct, are preparing for their proximate initiation. The term *electus* will remain in the Roman liturgy; elsewhere the term *competens* is often used.

Chapters 15–22 of the *Traditio apostolica* deal with Christian initiation. We will divide the treatise into five steps, referring the reader to a careful reading of the text and mentioning here only the most important points of these steps.

First step (15–16): Presentation of the candidates

The candidates present themselves, brought by friends to the διδάσκαλος for instructions. The friends are questioned about the identity and conduct of the person they are bringing. We should note certain impediments to entrance into the catechumenate, impediments associated with particular professions.

Second step (17–19): The period of the catechumenate

Assuming the candidate has been accepted, there follows a three-year course of instructions. During this time the candidates pray separately and not with the faithful. Neither do they exchange the kiss of peace. At the end of the catechesis the διδάσκαλος, whether he is a cleric or layperson, lays his hand on the catechumen. We note that this practice will be restored in the present ritual of the catechumenate. It is stated that if a catechumen were martyred for the faith, the catechumen would be baptized in blood.

Third step (20): Proximate preparation for initiation
After three years of instructions, and after a new interrogation and examination of the candidates and of their friends concerning them, the catechumens are permitted to listen to the gospel. From now on the catechumen is an *electus* and takes part in the Liturgy of the Word, receives a daily laying on of hands and is exorcised.

During the days immediately preceding initiation, the bishop himself exorcises the candidates to learn if they are pure; otherwise they will be dismissed. Three days before baptism, Thursday, the *electus* bathes, and on Friday begins to fast until the night between Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday the bishop gathers all those who are to be initiated. They kneel before the bishop, who lays his hand on them by way of exorcism. The bishop breathes on their face, then makes the sign of the cross on their forehead, ears, and nose. Throughout the entire night they keep vigil in prayer with readings and catecheses.

Fourth step (21): Initiation
This step includes three closely related parts: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist.

a) Baptism
1) At the end of chapter 20 it is explained that those who are to be baptized bring nothing with them except what is needed for the Eucharist, for then they will be worthy to present their offerings.

2) At cockcrow the water is blessed, either from a fountain or with rainwater or any other water.

3) The candidates remove their clothes.

4) The children are baptized first. Those who can do so answer the questions of faith; if they cannot, their parents, relatives, or some family member does so for them. Next the men are baptized, then the women. The latter have loosened their hair and wear neither rings nor any object of gold or silver. No one may wear any object when entering the water.

5) The holy oils are blessed. At the time set for baptism, the bishop gives thanks over the oil, which he places in an ampulla. It is the oil of thanksgiving. Then he exorcises another oil, the oil of exorcism.

6) A deacon carries the oil of exorcism and takes his place at the priest's left; another deacon takes his place at the priest's right with the oil of thanksgiving.

7) The priest calls each candidate, who must pronounce the following formula of renunciation: "I renounce you, Satan, your empty promises and all your works."

8) After the renunciation, the priest anoints the candidate with the oil of exorcism, saying: "May all evil spirits depart from you." Then he gives the naked candidate to the bishop or priest, who is standing near the water.

9) A deacon enters the water with the candidates, and the one who is baptizing, laying his hand on them, questions them about their faith. The candidates respond "I believe" to each question. The content of the three questions is as follows: belief in the Lord, the Almighty; belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died, ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father and who will come to judge the living and the dead; belief in the Holy Spirit and the Church.

10) After baptism, the neophytes are anointed by the priest with the oil of thanksgiving, with these words: "I anoint you with holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ."

b) Confirmation

1) When the neophytes have put on their clothes, they enter the church. The bishop places his hand on them, saying: "Lord God, you have made them worthy to obtain the forgiveness of sins through the bath of rebirth; make them worthy to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and send your grace upon them so that they may do your will and serve you, for yours is the glory, Father and Son, with the Spirit in your holy Church, now and forever. Amen."

2) Then the bishop takes the oil of thanksgiving and pours it on the head of the baptized, saying: "I anoint you with holy oil in God the Father almighty and in Christ Jesus and in the Holy Spirit."

3) The bishop traces the sign of the cross on the neophyte's forehead and gives the kiss of peace, saying: "The Lord be with you." And the person who has been signed responds: "And with your spirit."

4) From now on they will pray with all the people. For they do not pray with the faithful before they have received all this. And when they pray, they will exchange the kiss of peace.

c) The Eucharist

1) The deacons present the offerings to the bishop, who gives thanks over the bread that it may be the symbol of the body of Christ, over the cup of wine that it may be the image of the blood that was shed for those who believe in him, and over the milk and honey to indicate the fulfillment of the promise made to our ancestors, which speaks of a land flowing with milk and honey.

On this earth Christ offered his flesh on which are nourished, like children, those who believe. May he who by the sweetness of his words makes sweet the bitterness of our heart (that is, our soul) produce the same effects in our body.

2) The bishop will speak of all these things to those who receive communion. When he has broken the bread and given each one a piece, he says: "The bread of heaven in Christ Jesus." The one who receives the bread answers "Amen." If there are not enough priests, the deacons hold the cup. The first presents water; the second, milk and honey; the third, wine. The one presenting the cup says: "In almighty God" and the recipient answers "Amen." "And in the Lord Jesus Christ," with the response "Amen." "And in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church," with the response "Amen." It is done in the same way for each cup and for each person baptized and confirmed.

Fifth step: The mystagogia

When everything is finished, all must pledge themselves to do good works, be pleasing to God, conduct themselves properly, and be full of zeal for the Church, practicing what they have learned and advancing in holiness. Should it be necessary to give further information, the bishop will do this in private to all who have received the Eucharist. Unbelievers are not permitted to know about these things before they have received the Eucharist. This is the amulet (RSV: white stone) of which John writes: "I shall also give a white amulet upon which is inscribed a new name, which no one knows except the one who receives it" (Rev 2:17).

A brief commentary is necessary to point out certain facts that can clarify some problems or at least provide food for reflection.

1) The discipline of the catechumenate has strongly influenced the Roman liturgy of the scrutinies, which we will study. Note the custom of baptizing children, even those who are too young to speak.

2) We have seen during the catechumenate the laying of a hand upon the catechumen, a practice restored in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults with a rich selection of prayers to be used either by a cleric or layperson.

3) We note the rite of *ephphetha,* which will be kept later, but we find no reference to the rite of salt, which will be emphasized so much in the *GeV.*

4) We note the anointing with the oil of exorcism after the renunciation. This location after the renunciation is a bit strange, since anointing presumably signified the conferral of the strength needed for combat. At any rate, this anointing was probably done over the entire body as for a fighter. The anointing was probably placed here because the struggle against the demon would take place in the water.

5) After baptism there is another anointing by the priest with the oil of thanksgiving (our chrism). Note that the formula is declarative and does not refer to any particular effect.

6) For confirmation, the details seem important for the author's theology.

The bishop imposes his "hand," not his hands. Baptism is referred to as forgiveness of sins. Now, in confirmation, there is a gift of the Spirit. The purpose of this gift is to enable the one confirmed "to serve (the Father) according to his will." We will see, when we deal with confirmation, the cultic meaning of the word "serve" in the *Traditio Apostolica.* Note that the formula for the oil of thanksgiving and for the anointing and signing is declarative, with no reference to a particular effect.

7) The phrase "They do not pray with the faithful before they have received all this" means that for the *Apostolic Tradition* both baptism and confirmation are necessary for true membership in the Church and specifically for admission to prayer, confirmation being a kind of deputation to worship.

5. *Ambrose of Milan*

St. Ambrose wrote much about Christian initiation, and not only in his well-known works *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis,* where he dealt with it specifically. No one doubts the authenticity of the *De sacramentis*

anymore. A certain lack of order, repetitions, and a certain neglect of style compared with the *De mysteriis* and Ambrose's other writings in general had led to doubts as to its authenticity. But most authors now agree that the *De sacramentis* is a stenographic version of homilies by Ambrose. But since the *De sacramentis* provides us with information not found in the *De mysteriis,* we will use the text of the *De sacramentis* as a basis for the development of initiation, referring at times to the *De mysteriis* or to other works.

This catechesis is mystagogic, and it is interesting to realize that the Fathers prefer this style of catechesis.[29] Thus we will find no details about the catechumenate; there are only allusions, since the entire catechesis focuses on the sacraments that have been received.

Ambrose begins with the rite of *ephphetha,* which for him is closely linked with what will follow during the night of Easter. He associates the rite with Mark 7:34 and the healing of the deaf-mute, but he has a hard time justifying touching the nostrils instead of the mouth, and his explanation is rather strange. He did not understand touching the nostrils as the ability to perceive and follow the *bonus odor Christi,* with reference to the Canticle of Canticles.[30] The starting point for his catechesis, as for most patristic catecheses on the sacraments, is the liturgical sign and the typology to which it refers.[31]

The *ephphetha* is followed by the anointing before the renunciation.[32] In the *Traditio Apostolica* this anointing took place after the renunciation and before entering the water. The rite of anointing therefore has a different meaning.

Water is obviously central to the rite of baptism, and here Ambrose lists everything he knows about the typology of the baptismal water. He dwells at length on this typology, which extends beyond his first catechesis and into the second.[33] Speaking of baptism itself, Ambrose sees the water as an image of Christ's tomb. The water is an agent that enables us to be, as it were, truly buried with Christ.[34] The font is a

[29] *De mysteriis,* 1, 2: *Deinde quod inopinantibus melius se ipsa lux mysteriorum infuderit quam si ea sermo aliqui praecuccurrisset.* Cyril of Jerusalem expresses the same idea in *Mystagogic Catecheses* 1.

[30] *De sacramentis,* 1, 3; *De mysteriis,* 1, 4.

[31] A. Nocent, "Sacramenti," *DPAC* 2, 3051–3059.

[32] *De sacramentis,* 1, 4.

[33] Ibid., 1, 13–24; 2, 1–16.

[34] Ibid., 2, 19.

tomb. Baptism is given with a threefold interrogation and the threefold response "I believe." Using a favorite expression, Ambrose describes the sacramental sign and its content as a *similitudo mortis.* After baptism the bishop anoints the baptized, using a prayer that was to remain in our rituals, unchanged, until Vatican II: *Deus, Pater omnipotens, qui te regeneravit ex aqua et Spiritu concessitque tibi peccata tua, ipse te unget in vitam aeternam.*[35]

After baptism the bishop washes the neophyte's feet in memory of the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday and the words of Jesus to Peter. Ambrose is quite aware that this is a special practice of the Church of Milan and is unknown in Rome. He is amazed that this washing of the feet is not done in Rome, the see of Peter, and he claims the right to perform this gesture even if Rome does not.[36]

We pass now to the description of a new rite, designated by the term *spiritale signaculum.* Ambrose explains this expression as follows: *post fontem superest ut perfectio fiat.* These words may be taken to mean that baptism has inserted us into a new life, but we must still receive its *perfectio* through the outpouring of the Spirit, who is a *Spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii atque virtutis.* This infusion of the Spirit and his seven gifts is conferred through an invocation spoken by the bishop. But Ambrose does not tell us whether or not this invocation was accompanied by a laying on of the hand.[37]

Ambrose continues his catechesis from the supreme sacrament of Christian initiation, the Eucharist.[38] His treatise is rich but does not particularly emphasize the connection between the Eucharist and the two sacraments of initiation that precede it.

6. *Augustine of Hippo*

When St. Augustine writes about Christian initiation, it is not so much to provide information about the rites as to combat erroneous positions or to reflect on certain situations. For this reason we must go through Augustine's works and cautiously reconstruct what he has written on the subject of Christian initiation. We know that besides this problem of scattered references to initiation, there is also the question of the authenticity of the sermon or book we are examining. We will not go

[35] Ibid., 2, 20.
[36] Ibid., 3, 7.
[37] Ibid., 3, 8.
[38] Ibid., 4, 1–29

into theological questions, even though these are very interesting, such as the baptism of infants, etc. We will limit ourselves to liturgical questions.

The prebaptismal liturgy of Augustine's time does not present any novelties worth mentioning. The catechumens are divided into two groups: the *audientes* and the *competentes.* The *audientes* receive the *signum crucis,*[39] the laying on of hands,[40] and the salt, which Augustine calls the *sacramentum salis.*[41] The *competentes,* called the *electi* in Rome, are all those preparing for imminent initiation. Augustine refers to the "scrutinies" without saying exactly what they are. But most likely he thinks of the scrutinies as complex rites of exorcism that are applied in order to make the candidate's heart progressively and spiritually more docile. They are an action of God who frees the heart. These exorcisms and scrutinies began after the enrollment at the beginning of Lent. *Dare nomen* is an expression familiar to St. Augustine.[42] Through the exorcisms the catechumen begins to be "crushed" in order to become a *membrum Christi.*[43] For the first time we find references to the rites of the *traditio* and *redditio* of the profession of faith and the Lord's Prayer.[44] This rite gives meaning to the catechumenate, which must teach the candidate to believe and to pray. St. Augustine's sermons on the Creed and the Lord's Prayer describe what was usually and most likely done in the rite of the *traditio:* a phrase of the text, then a commentary. The *redditio* presupposes recitation of the text from memory.

[39] *De catechizandis rudibus,* 26, 50; PL 40:314; CCL 46, 173; *Confessiones,* I, 17; PL 32:608; CSEL 33, 15. *Sermo* 215, 5; PL 38:1075, ed. P. Verbraken, *RBén* 68 (1958) 18–25. C. Vogel, "La signation dans l'Eglise des premiers siècles," *MD* 75 (1963) 37–51.

[40] *De peccatorum meritis,* 2, 26; PL 44:176; CSEL 60, 113. *De catechizandis rudibus,* 26, 50; PL 40:344; CCL 46, 173. *Confessiones,* I, 17; PL 32:668–669; CSEL 33, 15. *De peccatorum meritis,* 2, 26, 42; PL 44:176; CSEL 60, 113: . . . *Et quod accipiunt (catechumeni) quamvis non sit corpus Christi, sanctum est tamen, et sanctius quam cibi quibus alimur, quoniam sacramentum est.*

[41] B. Botte, "Sacramentum salis," *QL* 42 (1962) 322–330.

[42] *Sermo* 132, 1; PL 38:755.

[43] *Sermo* 227; PL 38:1099, 1101; SCh 116, 234–243: *Nomina vestra dedistis. Coepistis moli ieiuniis et exorcismis.*

[44] *Sermo* 228, 3; PL 38–1102. *Tractavimus ad eos de sacramento symboli . . . tractivimus de sacramento orationis dominicae. De fide et symbolo,* 10, 25; PL 40:196; CSEL 41, 32: *Haec est fides quae paucis verbis tenenda in Symbolo novellis christianis datur.* Note the same idea of *paucis verbis* that we will find in the *GeV* as an admonition at the *traditio symboli.* For the presentation of the Our Father, see Sermons 56 and 59.

The blessing of the baptismal water is as important for Augustine as it is for Ambrose. Although this blessing has a negative aspect, driving away the power of evil, it has primarily the positive aspect of new birth.[45] With regard to the formula of baptism, although the interrogatory formula still existed, there was already a Trinitarian formula like our own, perhaps to emphasize, against the Arians, the equality of the Son within the Trinity.[46]

[45] B. Neunheuser, "De benedictione aquae baptismalis," *EphLit* 44 (1930) 393–397.

[46] *Ego unum baptismum novi, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti nomine consignatum atque signatum, hanc formam ubi invenio, necesse est, ut adprobem, Ep.* 23, 4; PL 33:96-97. Perhaps in the *Pseudoathanasian Treatise* 7; CCL 9, 94–95, we have the oldest declarative baptismal formula: *Baptizo te in Patre et Filio et Sancto Spiritu.*

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Stefano Parenti

2

Christian Initiation in the East

In the last twenty years the Christian West has taken a keen interest in the Byzantine and Oriental *ordines* for Christian initiation, the theology they express or have expressed, and their actual celebration. In particular, scholars recognize that the East has always preserved in a quite visible form the original unity of the sacraments of initiation, a unity toward which the West seems to be moving again. Repeated ecumenical demands are not the only reason for this. Very few scholars are so devoid of pedagogical and catechetical sense as to call the initiation of children in the East a "simultaneous celebration" of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, as if these sacraments were three realities crammed together in a single ritual.

Today other reasons make a comparison between the baptismal liturgies of the East and the West almost unavoidable. First of all, the Roman rite of confirmation has adopted the Byzantine formula for the postbaptismal anointing.[1] There is also the great contemporary discussion of this sacrament and its precise meaning and relation to baptism.[2] In fact, the earliest stages of the Syrian and Armenian traditions can offer to the *lex credendi* (and thus the *lex orandi*) perspectives of unexpected depth and richness.

[1] Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Divinae consortium naturae* (August 15, 1971): *AAS* 63 (1971).

[2] See, for example A. Kavanagh, *Confirmation: Origins and Reform* (New York, 1988), and P. Turner, "The Origins of Confirmation: An Analysis of Kavanagh's Hypothesis," *Wor* 65 (1991) 320–336 (reprinted in Maxwell Johnson, ed., *Living Water, Sealing Spirit* [Collegeville, Minn., 1995] 238–258); also F. C. Quinn, "Confirmation Reconsidered: Rite and Meaning," *Wor* 59 (1985) 354–370 (reprinted in Johnson, *Living Water,* 219–237).

1. *Rebirth or Resurrection: From the* Lex Credendi *to the* Lex Orandi

To understand better the history and rites of baptism in the Eastern Churches, it is useful to compare its changes to those of another primordial sacrament of the Christian Church: the Eucharist. In both cases we see a first stage that points to a plurality of forms and models, even in things today considered "essential." Indeed, we can say that even the classic and normative sequence of the sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, anointing, Eucharist)[3] represents the final phase of a historical development rather than its beginning. But the comparison with the Eucharist does not stop here. Just as the ancient anaphoras question in various ways contemporary Catholic and Orthodox doctrine (anaphoras with or without the narrative of institution or the epiclesis that follows), so the ancient baptismal *ordines* of the Christian East raise more than a few questions for liturgists today. But, as G. Kretschmar has said, "A plurality of possibilities is itself apostolic."[4]

Such plurality in the manner of celebration flows essentially from different and almost opposing typologies based on an equal number of Scripture passages. On the one hand, we have John 3:5 (to be born again of the Spirit); on the other, there is Romans 6 (to die with Christ in order to rise with him). The first view is clearly pneumatological, the second christological. Depending on the situation, the baptismal font can be a womb in which we are born or a tomb in which we die in order to rise again. The Syrian and Armenian Churches depend on the Johannine theology, while the Byzantine Churches—and later the Syrian as well—preferred to follow the Pauline theology.[5] This distinction has particular consequences for the celebration, especially concerning the number of pre- and postbaptismal anointings.

The ancient Syrian baptismal rite did not include a postbaptismal anointing with μύρον (perfumed oil) but only the prebaptismal anointing with ordinary olive oil. At the end of the fourth century in the

[3] From now on, for the sake of terminology that is consistent with the texts and theology of the traditions here discussed, it is better to avoid the Western term "confirmation" when referring to the postbaptismal anointing.

[4] G. Kretschmar, "Recent Research on Christian Initiation," in Johnson, *Living Water, Sealing Spirit,* 11–34 (*SL* 12 [1977] 87–106).

[5] G. Winkler, *Das armenische Initiationsrituale: Entwicklungsgeschichtliche und liturgievergleichende Untersuchung der Quellen des 3. bis 10. Jahrhunderts,* OCA 217 (Rome, 1982) passim.

Antiochene tradition, we usually find, although not everywhere: (a) a signing *(rushma)* on the forehead with olive oil *(meshha)* before the blessing of the water; (b) an anointing of the entire body *(mshihuta)* with oil after the blessing of the water.

According to S. P. Brock, who has written many studies on the subject, the *rushma* is analogous to Jewish circumcision: a mark to show that the baptized is a sheep belonging to the flock of Christ the Shepherd. The anointing is also of Old Testament origin. It signifies protection against the Evil One (see Exod 12:23 and Ezek 9:4), and by it the candidate shares in the kingship and priesthood of the Messiah (anointed one). It is the *rushma* that confers filial adoption and enables the candidate to call God "Abba." The baptismal scenario is therefore that of the Jordan. The early model for initiation in ancient Syria closely imitates the Jewish ritual for the admission of proselytes, which included circumcision and baptism. But here the *rushma* takes the place of circumcision.

Again according to Brock, following the sudden Christianization of the empire in the fourth century, there was a growing desire to conceal the Jewish origins of Christianity in favor of Hellenistic culture. In such circumstances, the baptism-circumcision paradigm clearly had to be reinterpreted. There was a tendency to ascribe the conferral of the gifts of the Spirit, first to the water itself, then to the emerging postbaptismal anointing with μύρον. The prebaptismal anointing remained a kind of purification and exorcism.[6]

Three times the *Apostolic Constitutions* (an Antiochene text from about 380 and one of the first documents to attest to a postbaptismal anointing) connects the gift of the Spirit with the prebaptismal anointing. But this text is uncertain about the postbaptismal anointing with μύρον; it either confirms the profession of faith, seals the covenant, or signifies the abiding presence of the baptized in the sweet fragrance of Christ.[7] S. Voicu has recently called attention to the *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos*, a work probably written before the Council

[6] S. Brock, "The Transition to a Post-Baptismal Anointing in the Antiochene Rite," in B. D. Spinks, ed., *The Sacrifice of Praise. Studies on the Themes of Thanksgiving and Redemption in the Central Prayers of the Eucharistic and Baptismal Liturgies. In Honour of Artur Hubert Couratin,* BELS 19 (Rome, 1981) 215–225.

[7] See *Constitutiones Apostolorum,* III, 16; VII, 22–23; 42, 144; M. Metzger, ed., *Les Constitutions Apostoliques,* II, SCh 329 (Paris, 1986) 156–159; III, SCh 336 (Paris, 1987) 48–49, 100–105.

of Ephesus (431) or at least before the end of the fourth century. Its point of view is the same as that of the *Constitutiones*.[8]

A different mystagogy of baptism is expressed in the second and third catecheses of Cyril (John II) of Jerusalem (after 380). His reflection centers on the theology of death found in Romans 6:3. Liturgically speaking, the crucial moment of initiation is the immersion, for which the candidate is prepared by an anointing, which by now is a kind of exorcism and does not confer the gifts of the Spirit. These will be given by the postbaptismal anointing.[9] The adoption of one theology or the other is also reflected in the prayer of blessing of the baptismal water, which, influenced by Romans 6:3, takes on exorcistic connotations.[10]

The present Eastern Christian *ordines* of initiation are like so many palimpsests. At times the two theologies exclude each other, and at other times they are superimposed and thus reinterpreted. This is especially true in the Byzantine Rite, whose baptismal tradition is described here.

2. *Period Prior to the Euchologia (5th–7th Century)*

The first evidence concerning Christian initiation in Constantinople goes back to the episcopate of John Chrysostom (397–407) and comes to us from the historian Palladius. Speaking of the Easter Vigil of 404, he refers to the readings and baptism of the catechumens that took place then as an "established practice."[11] An anonymous preacher who uses Chrysostom's name and whose work must be placed between 381 and 431, when referring to the threefold fruit in the parable of the sower (Mark 4:8), clarifies for us the threefold ritual sequence of initiation: anointing, immersion and Eucharist. The same author tells us that the anointing (χρῖσμα) was done with μύρον, "the good and immortal fragrance of the Spirit." Later, a second author from Constanti-

[8] S. Voicu, "Textes peu connus concernant l'onction prebaptismale," *Irén* 64 (1991) 470–473.

[9] See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catéchèses mystagogiques,* introduction, critical text and notes by A. Piédagnel, translation by P. Paris, SCh 126 (Paris, 1988). For a complete and thorough analysis of the various traditions, see G. Winkler, "The Original Meaning of the Prebaptismal Anointing and Its Implications," in Johnson, *Living Water, Sealing Spirit,* 58–81 (*Wor* 52 [1978] 24–45).

[10] G. Winkler, "La benedizione dell'acqua nelle liturgie orientali," *Conc* 2 (1985) 81–91.

[11] A.-M. Malingrey with the collaboration of Ph. Leclercq (ed.), *Palladios, Dialogue sur la vie de Jean Chrysostome,* 1, SCh 341 (Paris, 1988) 196.

nople who also uses Chrysostom's name and writes in the year 400 confirms the same sequence.[12]

Just a few decades later the homilies of the patriarch Proclus (d. 446) allow us to fill in what scarce data we have. The celebration is still that of the Easter Vigil, in which the catechumens, dressed in sackcloth, renounce Satan and, with hands raised, accept Christ and recite the profession of faith and the Our Father (Homily 27). Next follows the anointing with μύρον and oil, the immersion itself, the donning of the baptismal robe, the procession to the church with the singing of Psalm 31, and the Eucharistic liturgy, for which the Gospel reading (Matt 28:19) is also indicated (Homilies 27 and 31). On the Sunday after Easter the neophytes lay aside their baptismal robes (Homily 33).[13]

This evidence shows that in Constantinople, as in Syria and Armenia, a distinct postbaptismal anointing had not yet appeared, at least before the fifth century. Some modern authors have thought that they could see earlier proof of this in the seventh (and last) canon of the second ecumenical council, the Council of Constantinople (381). But for some time critics have regarded it as spurious and recognized it as a letter sent to Nestorius by one of the patriarchs of Antioch—perhaps Mennon—in the year 428.[14] The letter, which explains the criteria for the readmission of heretics, says that some of them are received into the Church, without being rebaptized, simply through an anointing with μύρον and the formula "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."[15]

Around 692 the so-called Council in Trullo, in canon 95 on the admission of heretics, accepted the provisions of this letter. At the same time it enacted several canons intended to regulate the sacramental process of initiation, which was evidently open to certain abuses. For example, it prohibited baptism in domestic oratories under pain of removal from office, and it insisted on the rights of cathedral churches

[12] S. Voicu, "Textes peu connus," 470–473.

[13] J. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople,* ST 247 (Vatican City, 1967) 188–194, 224–225, 237–251; see also S. Janeras, "La predicació pasqual i baptismal de Procle de Constantinoble," *RCT* 5 (1980) 131–151.

[14] There is a good summary in B. Varghese, *Les onctions baptismales dans la tradition syrienne,* CSCO, Subsidia 82 (Louvain, 1989) 119–120.

[15] Ed. J.-B. Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici Graecorum historia et monumenta* (Rome, 1848) 2:187–188.

(καθολικαῖς ἐκκλησίαις) in this matter. It also reaffirmed the obligation of candidates to undergo prior instruction.[16]

3. Christian Initiation in the Barberini Euchologion

The first and oldest written witness we have to the rites of Christian initiation in Byzantium is the euchologion *Barberini gr.* 336, which dates from the second half of the eighth century. Although the codex was copied in southern Italy—and thus in the provinces—it often contains authoritative liturgical traditions from Constantinople. We will give a brief presentation of its contents in the same order as they appear in the manuscript.[17]

a) Prayers for the newborn

The prebaptismal section of the *Barberini* euchologion does not begin, as we might expect, with the catechumenate for adults, but with two prayers for a child who "receives its name" and "enters the church" on the eighth and fortieth days after birth (nn. 112–113).[18] The first prayer, despite its rubrical heading, does not mention the giving of a name. Instead it asks that the light of the divine countenance may shine on the child and that he or she may be marked with the sign of Christ's cross, ideas that are made explicit by signing the child on the forehead, breast, and mouth. Botte believes that the prayer, which is known in various Oriental traditions, originally marked an adult's entrance into the catechumenate.[19]

[16] See P.-P. Joannou, *Discipline générale antique.* Tome I^{er}, I^{ère} partie: "Les canons des conciles oecuméniques (II^{e}–IX^{e} s.)." Pontifical Commission for the Preparation of the Code of Oriental Canon Law (Grottaferrata, 1962) 230–233, 195, 215, canons 95, 59, 78.

[17] For the sake of completeness, we mention the articles on Byzantine initiation by M. Arranz that appeared in *OCP* between 1983 and 1989; but we advise the reader that what is said here presupposes a different methodological and textual approach. For an evaluation of Arranz's work, see H. Brakmann, "Der Gottesdienst der Östlichen Kirchen," *ALW* 30 (1988) 359–362.

[18] To avoid overloading the footnotes, references to our edition of the codex *(BAR)* will be given in parentheses in the text; the number is that of the individual prayers.

[19] B. Botte, "Note sur la signation d'un enfant," *OS* 1 (1956) 185–188; see also M. Arranz, "Les sacrements de l'ancien euchologe constantinopolitain (3)," II^{ème} partie: "Admission dans l'Eglise des enfants des familles chrétiennes («Premier catécuménat»)," *OCP* 49 (1983) 284–302.

The second prayer adopts a frankly historicizing view (Luke 2:25-35) and is also known in Oriental traditions.[20] It seems that in an earlier period it was also accompanied by a signing, as can be deduced from the *Life* of the abbess Elizabeth of Constantinople (before 591).[21] The appearance of such a prayer goes back to a time after the great mass baptisms and indicates a certain decline in the adult catechumenate. We learn from the *Life* of the abbess Elizabeth that already in her time baptism could be conferred (by way of exception?) on the fortieth day.

b) Private and collective catechumenate

The catechumenate for adults begins, like that for newborn infants, with a prayer *ad catechumenum faciendum* preceded by an insufflation and signing on the forehead, mouth, and breast (n. 114). The codex directs the celebrant to remove the shoes and loosen the clothes of the candidate. Then he turns the candidate to face east. Three exorcisms follow (nn. 115–117) and a prayer *ad catechumenum faciendum.* Just before baptism (n. 118) there is another insufflation and signing on the forehead, mouth, and breast. Immediately after this, the candidate's shoes are removed and his clothes loosened again. He is made to face west, hands raised, for the renunciation (ἀπόταξις), which takes the form of questions and answers. After the first question, "Do you renounce Satan . . .?" a rubric notes that the one to be baptized or else the godfather responds. The candidate is then turned toward the east for the acceptance (σύνταξις) of Christ (n. 119), which includes, among the various formulas, the recitation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The rite concludes with a prayer by the president. Note that the two prayers before and after the renunciation/acceptance are also found in the Alexandrine, Ethiopian, and East Syrian traditions.[22]

This austere sequence of prayers and meager rubrics suggests the following reflections: (1) the beginning of the catechumenate is not tied to any fixed date; (2) the two prayers *ad catechumenum faciendum* are in the singular, whereas the three exorcisms and the final prayer of the catechumenate are in the plural; (3) as already mentioned, the text of the renunciation/acceptance envisions the possibility of a godfather

[20] See DS 637.

[21] F. Halkin, "Sainte Elisabeth d'Héraclée, abbesse à Constantinople," *AB* 91 (1973) 256.

[22] See DS 397, 401, 424–425, 426; 434–435; 625–626, 630.

who responds in the candidate's name; (4) the same text of the renunciation/acceptance wavers in the rubrics between singular and plural; (5) it is the celebrant who removes the shoes and loosens the garments of the candidate.

On the one hand, this ensemble of data presupposes a catechumenate that is slowly becoming merely a ritual, its immediate subjects being children. On the other hand, a rite that was once collective is undergoing a process of privatization. But to learn something about the collective rite, we must leave initiation for a moment and go to another chapter of our famous euchologion.

c) Cathedral rite of renunciation/acceptance

Between the blessing of the μύρον, which takes place during the single Holy Thursday evening liturgy, and the abjuration of heresy, which is followed by the consecration of a church, the editor of the *Barberini* has placed an interesting rite entitled "Renunciation and acceptance celebrated by the archbishop on Good Friday of Pascha." From the rubrics that follow we also learn that the rite took place around noon "in the old church of Hagia Eirene," which enables us to identify the unknown archbishop with the archbishop of Constantinople (nn. 144–145).

The rite began with the greeting by the celebrant, who is now anonymously called "pontiff" (ἀρχιερεύς), a clear sign that the patriarchal rite has been spontaneously adapted to a local diocesan situation. He immediately invites the catechumens to sign themselves, remove their shoes, and loosen their belt. After this begins the "catechesis," a long exhortation, within which the highly dramatized rite of renunciation/acceptance takes place. As presented in the *Barberini* euchologion, the archbishop's catechesis seems to presuppose adult candidates or those old enough to understand what was being said to them and take an active and conscious part in the rite, since they are able to remove their shoes, turn toward the east, then the west, and respond to the celebrant's questions.

If we accept the year 740 (when the church of Hagia Eirene was rebuilt) as a *terminus ante quem*, we can easily date the *Barberini* catechesis. But the codex obviously reports an older tradition, already known at the beginning of the sixth century. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (ca. 528), Theodore the Reader says that Timotheos, patriarch of Constantinople (511–518), had ordered the profession of faith to be

recited in every Eucharistic celebration, whereas before this was done only on Good Friday during the bishop's catechesis.[23]

d) Baptism

Unlike the catechumenate, the celebration of baptism has a context. It takes place on Holy Saturday, more precisely during the Easter Vigil, which, in the Constantinople tradition, began at sunset. It included Vespers and a celebration of the Word with Old Testament readings, during which baptism and the anointing with holy μύρον took place in the baptistery, followed by the Eucharist of the vigil.[24]

The rite begins with a series of intentions in litany form led by the deacon (n. 120), while the celebrant quietly recites an apology in which he asks pardon for his sins so that he might be worthy to celebrate the sacraments of initiation (n. 121) and the blessing of the water (n. 122). It is an extremely old formula, a veritable palimpsest on which we can read the movements and changes in the theology of baptism mentioned above. The formula includes a triple insufflation and signing.[25]

Immediately after the blessing of the water, the celebrant blesses the oil for the prebaptismal anointing. He breathes on it three times, reciting a prayer whose overtones are plainly exorcistic. At this point we should recall that, in the Byzantine tradition, the blessing of the oil mentioned here, as well as that for the anointing of the sick, is not reserved to the bishop. The celebrant pours some of the oil into the baptismal font, singing the Alleluia alternately with the assembly. Then he anoints the candidate in the form of a cross on the forehead, breast, and shoulders, with the formula: "The servant of God *N.* is anointed (χρίεται) with the oil of gladness (Ps 44:8) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is the deacon's task to anoint the entire body.

[23] Theodore the Reader, *Historia Ecclesiastica,* 2:32; PG 86:201–202. See R. Taft, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom,* OCA 200 (Rome, 1978[2]) 398–401.

[24] G. Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church,* OCA 193 (Rome, 1972).

[25] The now outdated work by H. Scheidt, *Die Taufwasserweihegebet in Sinne vergleichender Liturgieforschung untersucht,* LQF 29 (Münster i. W, 1935), compares the various traditions.

Once anointed, the candidate is baptized, that is, immersed in the water by the celebrant with the declarative formula: "The servant of God *N.* is baptized in the name (of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit)." Then the cantor sings the first verse of Psalm 31, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins.

A second prayer in the form of a diaconal litany (mentioned but not given in the text) marks the transition from baptism to the postbaptismal chrismation. The transition is made more explicit by a prayer asking for the gift of the Spirit and the grace to take part in the Eucharist (n. 124). As Galatians 3:27 is sung, the celebrant anoints the baptized with μύρον, tracing a sign of the cross on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, and ears with the well-known formula: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." This second anointing is always done by the presbyter celebrant; Byzantine tradition does not reserve it to the bishop, who is considered the original minister not only of chrismation but of *all* the sacraments. Therefore this is not a "privilege" enjoyed by Byzantine and Oriental presbyters, as is often asserted. Next follows the song of entrance into the church and the Eucharistic celebration (n. 125).

e) Ablution

At the end of the baptismal rites, the *Barberini* euchologion has a prayer for the "washing off" (ἀπόλουτρον; n. 126).[26] From its text we cannot learn much about its purpose. But from the rite for reconciliation and readmission of heretics to the Church, which is found in the same codex (nn. 146–147) and depends largely on canon 95 of the Council in Trullo, we know that the neophytes, eight days after their baptism, gathered in church for the ritual washing of the parts anointed with holy μύρον. At least in the case of newly baptized adults, they were not allowed to eat meat or wash their face during that week. The regulations for the readmission of Christians who had converted to Islam, written in 845 by the patriarch Methodius (843–847), state that during those seven days the neophytes took part in the Eucharistic celebration and wore new clothes.[27] This "octave" has parallels in the rites for marriage and monastic profession.

[26] M. Arranz, "Les sacrements de l'ancien euchologe constantinopolitain (9)," IV[e] partie: "L'«Illumination » de la nuit de Pâques." Chapitre VI: "Ablution et tonsure des néophytes," *OCP* 55 (1989) 33–62.

[27] Ed. M. Arranz, "La Diataxis du Patriarche Méthode pour la réconciliation des Apostates. Les sacrements de la restauration de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopo-

4. *Initiation in the Episcopal and Patriarchal Books*

The catechesis given by the archbishop on Good Friday morning, whose text has fortunately been preserved in the *Barberini* euchologion, is but one moment in the process of Christian initiation as celebrated in the Byzantine cathedrals. Because of a sizeable lacuna in the euchologion *Paris Coislin* 213 (Constantinople, a. 1027), we have no complete ritual of initiation from the capital. But we do have a certain number of later, and even very late, books that offer a fairly complete picture of Christian initiation in the cathedral of Hagia Sophia between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century. These are the Συναξάριον preserved in the two manuscripts *Patmos* 266 (9th–10th cent.) and *Jerusalem Hagios Stauros* 40 (10th–11th cent.), the Old Testament lectionary *Venice, Marciana* 13 (11th cent.), the epistle lectionary *Dresda A* 104,[28] the euchologion *Γ.β. I* (13th cent.), and, in part, the euchologia *Athens, National Library* 662 and *Moscow, Holy Synod gr.* 279 (both 14th cent.).[29]

Although these euchologia are much later than the *Barberini,* we must examine them nevertheless, because initiation with the patriarch or bishop presiding is the normative reference for interpreting and understanding the parochial rite.

a) Prayers for the newborn

The prayers of the Grottaferrata euchologion *Γ.β. I* are the same as those given by the *Barberini* euchologion, except that the rubric which accompanies the prayer for the fortieth day no longer speaks of a simple (first) entrance of the child into the church but rather of its "ecclesialization" (ἐκκλησιάσαι). The text itself appears in a version different from that of the *Barberini* euchologion, but that is due to a

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litain, II–1," OCP 56 (1990) 238–333. But for the document's date and purpose, see P. Eleuteri and A. Rigo, *Eretici, Dissidenti, Musulmani ed Ebrei a Bisanzio: Una raccolta eresiologica del XII secolo* (Venice, 1993) 39.

[28] For the editions of these sources, I refer to the convenient explanation by G. Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church* (Rome, 1972) 113–115, 116–117.

[29] The text of initiation from the Grottaferrata euchologion has been published by M. Arranz in the different parts of his study that appeared almost uninterruptedly in *OCP* from 1983 to 1989. For the Athens codex, see P. Trempelas, Μικρόν Εὐχολόγιον (Athens, 1950–1955) 2, passim (sigla H), and for the Moscow codex see A. Dmitrievskij, *Bogosluzenie v Russkoj Cerkvi v XVI veke, Sluzby kruga sedmicnago i godicnago i cinoposledovanija tajnstv . . . Prilozenija* (Kazan, 1884) 9–16.

more general revision of the euchological texts following the second outbreak of Iconoclasm (a. 843).

b) Private and collective catechumenate

As in the *Barberini* euchologion, so in the Grottaferrata codex *Γ.β. I* the prayer *ad catechumenum faciendum* contains no reference to the possibility of beginning the catechumenate on any special date during the liturgical year. The texts of the prayers and exorcisms and the rubrics accompanying them are the same. Only in the initial rubric for the rite of renunciation/acceptance do we see a significant change. Whereas the *Barberini* says that the responses to the questions are given by the candidate or the godfather (in the case of a child), the Grottaferrata euchologion adds the words "if he is an adult," a sign that by this time baptism was ordinarily given to infant catechumens, who had not reached the age of reason, as has been wrongly supposed or maintained.

Various patriarchal acts confirm this fact, which the *Barberini* euchologion already seemed to support. For example, under the emperor Leo VI (886–912) the patriarch Stephen I (886–893) was asked whether a child could be baptized before the fortieth day, and in 1094 the patriarch Nicholas III Grammatikos mentions that "it is now the custom to baptize on the fortieth day after birth."[30]

But toward the end of the ninth century, the catechumenate experienced an unexpected revival, thanks to massive government campaigns aimed at the absorption of heretical movements and the Christianization—obviously forced—of non-Christians. In fact, from this period comes the lengthy collection of formulas of abjuration reported in the euchologion from Constantinople, *Paris Coislin* 213 (a. 1027). There are formulas for Manichaeans, Jews, Athingani and Muslims, each with its own ritual for admission to the catechumenate.[31]

Liturgically speaking, it was a situation of great flux. Between the ninth and eleventh centuries, the Συναξάριον of the cathedral of Constantinople continues to issue peremptory (but generally vague) appeals during the Eucharistic celebration on the second and third Sundays of Lent. Beginning on Monday of the fourth week of Lent, there should be brought to church "those whose duty . . . that they might receive the seal of Christ, be protected from the devil and

[30] V. Grumel, ed., *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarchat de Constantinople: Les actes des patriarches* (Bucharest, 1947) nos. 592 and 972.

[31] Eleuteri and Rigo, *Eretici*, 42–57, with reference to the available editions.

receive instructions."[32] In the second half of the eighth century, the *Barberini* euchologion had prescribed that during the evening Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, celebrated on the weekdays of Lent (288.30), there be added to the usual litany for the catechumens another for those to be enlightened (φωτιζόμενοι), who are the same as the Western *competentes* or the Roman *electi.* These eleventh-century monuments, already archaic, enable us to identify an intensive pre-Easter catechumenate in Constantinople, three weeks long, which has parallels in other traditions and so is of great interest for a comparative study of Lent.[33]

Like the *Barberini,* the ninth- and tenth-century documents and the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century euchologia still mention or give the text of the catechesis given by the patriarch on Good Friday morning, which was now attended by the mothers with their infant-catechumens in their arms.[34] On the other hand, the rite for baptism on Holy Saturday afternoon, with the patriarch presiding, does not follow the collective renunciation/acceptance in the euchologia but rather the private. By the end of the tenth century, the litany for the catechumens had been suppressed in the morning and evening offices,[35] and in the twelfth century even the word κατηχέω meant only "to recite the prayers of the catechumenate."[36]

c) Baptism

The euchologion *Γ.β. I* begins the actual baptismal rites with an interesting rubric: "Prayers for holy baptism, which the patriarch says after the preceding (= acceptance/renunciation), particularly on Holy Saturday evening." From these few lines we learn that cathedrals had other days for baptism in addition to the Easter Vigil. The Συναξάριον

[32] J. Mateos, *Le Typikon de la Grande Église, Ms. Sainte-Croix N°.* 40, OCA 166 (Rome, 1963) 2:38; H. Brakmann, "Der griechische Text der Konstantinopler προσφωνητικὸν τῶν κατηχουμένων," *OCP* 52 (1986) 211–213.

[33] M. E. Johnson, "From Three Weeks to Forty Days: Baptismal Preparation and the Origins of Lent," in Johnson, *Living Water,* 118–136 (*SL* 20 [1990] 185–200).

[34] S. Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine: Structures et histoire de ses offices,* SA 99–AL 13 (Rome, 1988) 311–315. The various texts have been collected by M. Arranz, "Les sacrements . . . (5). III[ème] partie: Préparation au Baptême (conclusion). Chapter II: Renonciation à Satan et Adhésion au Christ," *OCP* 50 (1984) 372–397.

[35] For example, *Moscow Rumjancev Sevastianov* 474 = *gr.* 27.

[36] See *Sinai gr.* 973 (1153/4), A.Dmitr, 2:92.

(9th–10th cent.) gives us a complete list of these: Theophany (January 6), the so-called Saturday of Lazarus (the day before Palm Sunday), Holy Saturday (morning), Pentecost Sunday.[37]

After the procession from the narthex to the nave accompanied by the singing of Psalm 140, the vigil continues with the Old Testament readings. At the first words of the second reading (Isa 60:1), the patriarch leaves his chair in the apse and goes to the Great Baptistery, where he puts on vestments and white slippers. Then he goes to the baptismal pool, incenses it on all sides, and blesses it with the candles. The rite continues exactly as described in the *Barberini* euchologion until the prebaptismal anointing, which is not done by the first celebrant but by "one of the presbyters" and is completed by the deacons. Meanwhile the patriarch girds himself with a towel and attaches sleevelets to his wrists. Then he baptizes the candidates with the usual formula, lowering and raising them three times. When the baptism is finished, the patriarch washes his hands and removes the towel and sleevelets while Psalm 31:1 is sung. After the chant, during which the newly baptized put on their clothes again, the patriarch recites the prayer introducing the postbaptismal anointing. After he has taken off his baptismal vestments, he vests again for the Eucharistic celebration. The postbaptismal chrismation takes place in the *consignatorium* dedicated to St. Peter, while the cantors sing Galatians 3:27. From the *consignatorium* the patriarch enters the church in solemn procession with the newly baptized while Psalm 31 is sung again. There he presides at the Eucharistic celebration of the Easter Vigil, which begins immediately with the epistle.

Some of the rubrics for other baptismal days introduce a short form of the prayer for the blessing of the water to be used on that occasion, which we already know from a southern Italian euchologion from the second half of the tenth century.[38]

d) Ablution and first cutting of the hair

The postbaptismal rites in the Grottaferrata euchologion *Γ.β. I* are much more developed than in the old Barberini. A different version of the prayer of ablution is accompanied by a rubric which prescribes

[37] See the convenient summary in M. Arranz, "Les sacrements . . . (8). IV^{ème} partie: L' «Illumination» de la nuit de Pâques. Chapitres II–V," *OCP* 53 (1987) 59–106.

[38] On the formula, see H. Engberding, "Ein übersehenes griechisches Taufwasserweihegebet und seine Bedeutung," *OKS* 14 (1965) 281–291.

that the celebrant take a new sponge soaked in water and wash the parts that were anointed with μύρον, reciting a prayer inspired by John 1:9. Compared with the *Barberini,* two prayers are also provided as a substitute, followed by two more prayers for the ritual offering of the first hair cut from the child.[39] In the oldest euchologia these prayers are usually found in the chapter with prayers for various needs. It represents the Christianization of an ancient custom of offering the first fruits to the divinity.

5. *Medieval Rituals (10th–15th Century)*

In the many manuscripts that have come down to us from this period, we see the more or less final lumping together in one celebration of the rites for the eighth and fortieth days after birth, the catechumenate, initiation itself, and the postbaptismal rites. Two euchologia from the edges of the Byzantine Empire, *Moscow gr.* 27 (Palestine) and *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X* (southern Italy), both from the tenth/eleventh century, offer clear proof of this. The prayer for the eighth day is preceded by the significant rubric "Continuous (ἀκόλυθος) rite of illumination," or, more simply, "Sequence (ἀκολουθία) for baptism."[40] A logical consequence of the lumping of the rites into a single celebration is that initiation becomes independent of the Easter Vigil, its special day in the liturgical year, now no longer mentioned in the *ordines.* Instead, *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X* is anxious to point out that the baptismal rites are also celebrated during the Easter Vigil.[41] Despite this, some presbyteral *ordines* contain not only an explicit reference to the Easter Vigil, but the patriarch is also mentioned and even the layout of the Byzantine cathedral.[42] The rubrics for the prebaptismal anointing reveal even more clearly the adaptations (not always successful) of the solemn patriarchal initiation to more modest parochial liturgies.[43]

[39] Found also in the Syro-Maronite tradition.

[40] *Moscow gr.* 27, f. 46v (A. Almazov, *Istorija cinoposledovanija krescenija i miropomazanija. Prilozenia* [Kazan, 1884] 4, note), and *Grottaferrata Γ.β. I,* f. 39v.

[41] *Grottaferrata Γ.β. I,* f. 45r.

[42] For example, *Ottoboni gr.* 344 (Otranto, a. 1277), f. 38r: "Celebration of holy baptism on Great and Holy Saturday, in the evening, in the great baptistery . . . the patriarch moves toward the baptismal font. . . ."

[43] Especially when the anointing is entrusted to "one of the presbyters" if there is only the presbyter celebrant (see, for example, *Sinai gr.* 957, f. 17v; *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X,* f. 49v; *Sinai gr.* 961, f. 66r).

Aside from rubrics, the clearest sign of a change in practice and mentality is the copyists' uncertainty in adapting prayers originally meant for a collective rite to one that is now private. There is constant confusion in different codices, with the same prayer alternating several times between the singular and the plural,[44] while the text of the prayer itself appears very stable.

A feature of some ancient Eastern and Italian euchologia is the gradual increase (starting in the tenth century) in the number of members anointed with μύρον and, eventually, in the formulas that accompany the postbaptismal anointing. What we have is a tradition limited to euchologia from the East and southern Italy. Its origin lies in Oriental liturgical traditions, such as the Alexandrine, which were transplanted to southern Italy in the seventh century and supplanted in their places of origin by forced imposition of the Byzantine rite around the end of the tenth century.[45]

A second and more noticeable feature of some Italo-Greek manuscripts is that between the tenth and eleventh century they changed the prayer for confirmation: *Deus omnipotens, pater domini nostri Iesu Christi, qui regenerasti famulos tuos . . .*, which is in fact from the Roman rite, duly translated into Greek and used instead of the Byzantine prayer.[46] Later, beginning in Otranto, the *traditio cerei et vesti* with its formula was added.[47] Finally the "form" was replaced by the first person, *Ego te baptizo . . .*, after Pope Gregory IX, in 1232, denied the validity of the Byantine declarative formula.[48]

To the customary prayer for the child, already seen in the *Barberini* euchologion, others were added for the new mother, which liturgically mark her return to church forty days after childbirth. The prayers,

[44] See S. Parenti, *L'eucholgio manoscritto Γ.β. IV (X sec.) della Biblioteca di Grottaferrata. Edizione,* excerpt from a doctoral dissertation (Rome, 1994) n. 158.

[45] For the Mideast see, for example, the euchologia *Sinai gr.* 957 (10th cent.), f. 19v; 958 (11th cent.), f. 71r; 961 (11th/12th cent.), f. 68r; 962 (11th/12th cent.), f. 113r; 1036 (12th/13th cent.), f. 94v; for southern Italy, see, for example, *Grottaferrata Γ.β. II* (early 12th cent.), f. 85v, which should be compared with the Alexandrine formula for anointing in DS 409 and 451.

[46] A. Strittmatter, "The Latin Prayer 'Ad Infantes Consignandos' in the Byzantine Rite of Confirmation," *OCP* 21 (1955) 308–320.

[47] A. Strittmatter, "Liturgical Latinisms in a Twelfth-Century Greek Euchology (Ottob. gr. 344)," *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati,* ST 123 (Vatican City, 1946) 3:41–64.

[48] C. Giannelli, "Un documento sconosciuto della polemica tra Greci e Latini intorno alla formula battesimale," *OCP* 10 (1944) 150–167.

which have a penitential flavor, sprang up outside Constantinople. The oldest witnesses (10th cent.) come from Greek-speaking Italy, where they do not appear with any of the baptismal rites, but instead are placed in an appendix to confession.[49] The following century in the Mideast the same texts are inserted after the prayer for the child.[50]

The shifting of initiation to the fortieth day after birth also contributed to the growth of the rites of ecclesialization. This led to dramatic developments. The child, in the celebrant's arms, is brought into the sanctuary, where it mimics a gesture of adoration (which it obviously cannot perform) while the Canticle of Simeon (Luke 3:2) is recited.

Also of Oriental origin (West Syrian and Alexandrine) are certain rites and prayers associated with a postbaptismal crowning and removal of the crown a week later. These are generally placed after the Byzantine ritual of tonsure.[51] A propitiatory rite typical of southern Italy is the so-called weighing (καμπανισμός), which consisted in offering an amount of gifts in kind equal to the weight of the child.[52]

Without going into the details of the many local traditions, between the tenth and the fifteenth century we see everywhere an expansion of the pre- and postbaptismal rites and an increase in the number of members anointed with μύρον. At the same time, initiation itself becomes increasingly compressed until all connection with the Eucharistic celebration is lost. In fact, after the fifteenth century the latter was simply omitted, with the result that the neophyte's first communion was from the reserved Eucharist. But the readings—those of the Easter Vigil—were retained.

6. *Byzantine Initiation Today*

Like other rites, the present baptismal rite depends on manuscripts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It codifies once and for all usages that have not been revised or changed since then.[53] The recipient

[49] See *Vaticano gr.* 1833, f. 43v; *Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV,* f. 54r; and *Γ.β. X,* f. 105r.

[50] See, for example, *Sinai gr.* 959, f. 80r; 962, f. 87v; 1036, f. 70r; and *Ottoboni gr.* 434 and the Armenian translation (DS 751).

[51] Compare *Sinai gr.* 961, f. 67v–68v and 973 (1153), f. 54rv (A.Dmitr, 93–94) with DS 410, 411, 451, and 635.

[52] A. Jacob, "Le rite du καμπανισμός dans les euchologes italo-grecs," in *Mélanges liturgiques offerts au R. P. Dom Bernard Botte O.S.B.* (Louvain, 1972) 223–244.

[53] An accurate description may be found in E. Braniste, "Le déroulement de l'Office de l'Initiation dans les Églises de rite byzantin et son interprétation," *OKS* 20 (1971) 115–129.

of the sacrament is normally a child a few weeks old. The same rite is used, without adaptations, as that for the baptism of an adult. Certainly the basic prayer themes are not limited by the recipient's age, but it is hard not to mention that several passages in some of the prayers are less than adequate, especially when one is able to understand the (often dead) liturgical language in which the rites are celebrated. Even in the case of the initiation of an adult, the books continue to speak the language of the late Middle Ages, even with regard to articles of clothing.[54]

Most of the time today initiation is a quasi-private rite involving only the child's close family and the celebrant. It is celebrated entirely without interruption in about half an hour, beginning with the prayers for the fortieth day to the ritual ablution, which should take place eight days later. The Eucharist is no longer celebrated, and all mention of communion has disappeared from the books, although this may be explained by the now widespread practice of postponing it until Sunday or the nearest feast. But it often happens, contrary to common sense, that initiation is celebrated on Sunday afternoon. In such celebration the congregational and symbolic aspects, otherwise well expressed in the ancient rituals, are notably lacking. Among the many models for the Byzantine celebration of initiation that have appeared throughout its long history, the present one is certainly the least traditional. There have been attempts—in Greece, for example—to return to a more ecclesial vision by conferring baptism and chrismation on Sunday, immediately before the Divine Liturgy, during which the neophyte receives communion for the first time. These, of course, are private initiatives by individual priests. But they deserve attention and support.

With regard to the Catholic Eastern Churches, since the eighteenth century some of them have followed the Roman model of initiation completely, substituting infusion for immersion, reserving the anointing with μύρον to the bishop and postponing "first communion." In most cases these things were not imposed by Rome but were autonomous decisions made by the synods of the particular Churches. The Byzantine communities of Italy were an exception. They were obliged to follow such hybrid liturgical practices by a number of disciplinary

[54] Even today it continues to speak of a catechumen whose belt the celebrant loosens, leaving him with just his tunic.

decrees, no longer in force today, of Benedict XIV (1740–1758), such as the constitution *Etsi pastoralis* (1742) and the encyclicals *Allatae sunt* (1755) and *Ex quo primum* (1756).[55] The practice today, officially confirmed not long ago, is to return to the authentic Eastern discipline in all things.[56] But the actual situation of individual Churches, coupled with a clergy whose formation has been weak, as well as a mistaken desire to be liturgically different from their Orthodox counterparts—all these are obstacles to an immediate, albeit desirable, restoration.[57]

[55] *Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide seu Decreta, Instructiones, Rescripta pro apostolicis missionibus* (Rome, 1907) 1:118–130, 234–254.

[56] See Congregation for the Oriental Churches, *Istruzione per l'applicazione delle prescrizioni liturgiche del Codice dei Canoni delle Chiese Orientali* (Vatican City, 1996) 38–46.

[57] R. Taft, "On the Question of Infant Communion in the Byzantine Catholic Church of the U.S.A.," *Diakonia* 17 (1982) 201–214.

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3

Christian Initiation in the Roman Church From the Fifth Century Until Vatican II

I. FROM THE FIFTH TO THE NINTH CENTURY

We have documents from the fifth century that contain many details on the catechumenate and the rites of initiation. The principal documents are the letter of John the Deacon to Senarius, the Gelasian Sacramentary, the Roman *Ordo* XI, the Gregorian Sacramentary, and the Gelasians of the eighth century. Study of these documents is indispensable, especially in view of a process of adaptation that can make today's pastoral practice more effective.

A. THE LETTER OF JOHN THE DEACON TO SENARIUS

The letter was written in 492. The deacon John, who is probably the author of the letter, was later to become Pope John I. The recipient of the letter, Senarius, was an official in Ravenna. He was interested in the rites of initiation and had written a letter to John asking for an explanation. John replied to him in these terms. Humans are born prisoners of sin; as soon they have received an elementary knowledge of the faith, the candidates must renounce the chains that bind them to the devil. A catechesis has been instituted and is presented in such a way as to explain the fundamentals of the faith. The period of the catechumenate includes various rites. Note that John is referring to a new situation. There have been several generations of Christians, and it is no longer necessary to allow three years from the time of enrollment until the proximate preparation for baptism. By now immediate preparation for initiation takes place immediately after enrollment.

John mentions the following different rites: (a) the imposition of hands: the catechumen becomes "holy" or separated from evil and

prepared for definitive freedom from evil; (b) insufflation on the face: the devil is expelled so that Christ may enter; (c) the giving of salt, which signifies preservation and establishment in wisdom; (d) the laying on of hands, which must be repeated frequently so that the catechumen may advance in the search for holiness; (e) the presentation of the Creed to those who have become *competentes;* (f) the scrutinies (which John mistakenly regards as examinations concerning the catechumen's faith, whereas tradition regarded them as solemn exorcisms); (g) touching the ears in order to acquire understanding and the nostrils so they might receive the *bonus odor Christi;* (h) touching the breast, the dwelling place of the heart, to indicate that the candidate must follow the precepts of Christ with a steadfast conscience and a pure heart. The candidate prepares to walk barefoot.

B. THE GELASIAN SACRAMENTARY

Today it is commonly accepted that the *GeV* was written in Rome, brought to France and transcribed at the monastery of Chelles (a few remains of which survive) around the year 750. The manuscript is kept in the Vatican Library: *Cod. Vat. Reg. lat.* 316. According to Chavasse,[1] we should repeat, this sacramentary was used in the *tituli,* or parish churches, of Rome and is from the same period as the *GrH,* a papal sacramentary that no longer includes the scrutinies, except the one for Holy Saturday morning. Perhaps, then, the two books are from different surroundings.

The *GeV* must be used carefully. In fact, even if it was probably written in Rome, the transcription made in France definitely introduced new elements. Even in the "Roman" edition we can see various stages of composition, sometimes within the same paragraph.

It is important for pastoral practice today to note that, despite appearances (for example the various "presentations"), the *ordo* for the catechumenate in the *GeV* was written for *infantes,* not for adults. Many rubrics prove this.[2] If we wish to restore a liturgical catechesis for parents preparing for the baptism of their children, we have here a

[1] See his book, which has now become a classic: *Le sacramentaire gélasien,* Tournai, 1958.

[2] *GeV* 195: *. . .qui ipsos infantes suscepturi sunt* 284: *. . . scribuntur nomina infantum* 289: *pones sal in ore infantis* 311: *. . . accipiens acolytus unum ex ipsis infantibus masculum, tenens eum in sinistro brachio, tenens manum super caput infantis . . .* 419: *mane reddunt infantes symbolum . . .* 443: *consignantur ipsi infantes.*

model that may at least serve as an experienced guide, even if it cannot be followed to the letter. A more in-depth study of the *GeV* is justified by the fact that our Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults *(OICA)* has borrowed from it to a great extent.

First Stage of Composition

1. XXVI–XXVIII, 193–328: Mass formulas for the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent. This is the oldest part. We should note, as an example of adaptation, the rubric for the third Sunday of Lent: *quae pro scrutiniis electorum celebratur* (*GeV* 93). But at the beginning of section XXVIII we read: *Denuntiatio pro scrutinio quod tertia hebdomada in quadragesima secunda feria initiatur* (*GeV* 283). This contradiction is due to an adaptation that will be developed in Roman *Ordo* XI, which was written for children, duplicating the three scrutinies given in the *GeV* and providing for their celebration on a weekday.[3]

2. XXX–XXXII, 285–287: *Orationes super electos ad catecumenum faciendum.* This disorganized group of *orationes* should be arranged as follows: (a) enrollment of names with the prayer *Deus humani generis*[4] (287); (b) insufflation; (c) tracing the sign of the cross with the prayer *Preces nostras*[5] (286); (d) a brief *ordo* for the salt: exorcism of the salt with the prayer *Exorcizo te, creatura salis* (288); blessing of the salt with the prayer *Omnipotens . . . respicere dignatus es*[6] (285); giving of the salt

[3] This could suggest that the *GeV* is dependent on *Ordo* XI. Thus M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge,* vol. 2: *L'Ordo XI* (Louvain, 1960) 365–447, especially 387 and 396f. A. Chavasse, *Le sacramentaire gélasien,* gives convincing arguments for the opposite view: *Ordo* XI depends on the *GeV,* 166f.

[4] This prayer (287) accompanies the enrollment of the names, which is now linked to the immediate preparation for baptism (as was already the case in the letter of John to Senarius), an adaptation justified by the fact that the family is already Christian. In the *GeV* this prayer is not in its proper place.

[5] In the *GeV,* this prayer (286) reads: *ut magnitudinis gloriae rudimenta servantes,* "that they may preserve the elements of their glory [received in the signing]." But copyists have corrupted the text by adding the word *tuae: ut magnitudinis gloriae tuae rudimenta servantes.* Now it is a question of the elements of the divine glory already received. The ritual of Paul V adopted this distorted reading. At the time when studies were being done for the Vatican II ritual, it was decided to go back to the old text of the *GeV.* But it seems the printers were given a text from the ritual of Paul V, and the unhappy change made by the copyists is still with us. The old version should be restored.

[6] This prayer (285), the first in the group, should actually go with the blessing of the salt; it refers to the *rudimenta fidei* acquired by the catechumen.

with the formula *Accipe, ille, sal* (289); final blessing with the prayer *Deus Patrum nostrorum*[7] (290).

3. XXXIII, 291–298: the exorcisms. The title *Item exorcismi super electos* shows the important change that has been introduced into the practice of admission to the catechumenate. The former rites of admission are grouped under the heading *Orationes super electos* (XXX). Since there no longer exists a long period of catechesis between these rites and the immediate preparation for baptism, the exorcisms (once celebrated much later) are now joined to the rites of admission by the heading *Item exorcismi super electos* (XXXIII).[8]

The scrutinies celebrated on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent have a special euchology in the *GeV.* The celebration of the scrutinies in the *GeV* begins on the third Sunday of Lent, whereas the documents that contain the oldest Roman liturgy place the second scrutiny and its readings on the second Sunday.[9] It was moved to the third Sunday because of the introduction of the Ember Days, one of which is celebrated on Saturday evening. That is why for the second Sunday we read *"Dominica vacat."*[10] But the *GeV* includes Mass formulas for the second Sunday (XXV, 163–167). We note that the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults has yielded to a certain archaism in beginning the scrutinies on the third Sunday. There is no reason for this, since the Ember Days have been suppressed and there is no longer an Ember Saturday liturgy celebrated in the evening. The euchology for these Masses includes a *Memento* that mentions the godparents and a *Hanc igitur* that prays for the elect.

[7] This prayer (290) looks ahead to the Eucharist: *primum pabulum salis.* The omission of the rite of salt requires serious reasons, considering how important this rite was in the past.

[8] Note how the exorcisms are linked to the readings for the Sundays of Lent: the exorcism *super feminas* (293) refers to Susanna freed from false accusations, a frequently depicted episode, for example in the catacombs of Priscilla in Rome. The exorcism *super masculos* (310) refers to Jesus walking on the water and extending his hand to Peter. The second exorcism *super feminas* (297) refers to the man born blind and to Lazarus.

[9] For example, the liturgy of Benevento; see J. Mallet and A. Thibaut, *Les manuscrits en écriture bénéventaine de la Bibliothèque capitulaire de Bénévent,* vol. 1, ms. 1–18, ed. CNRS. In codices 8, 12, 18 the gospel of the Samaritan woman (John 4:5-42) is read on the second Sunday of Lent.

[10] *GrH* 45, 202.

Would it be possible to restore the biblical readings connected with the organization of these Sunday exorcisms? It is not easy. In fact, the oldest Roman lectionary is the Würzburg from 750. But we know from *ms. Benevento* and the lectionary of Victor of Capua that the Sunday readings were moved to a weekday, and on these days we can find the gospel reading that was assigned (prior to *Ordo* XI) to the Sunday from which it has been moved. One of the great merits of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was its decision to restore the biblical readings for these Sundays. We shall see this in detail when we discuss the *OICA.*

4. XXXV–XXXVI, 310–328: presentation of the Creed and the Our Father. Since the *ordo* in the *GeV* is addressed primarily to children and *Ordo* XI was written expressly for them, these celebrations would not have been understood unless the rites were seen as addressed to the parents and godparents for their catechesis and to responsibly prepare them for the baptism of their children. These rites should be studied not only because they have been used in the *OICA* but also because they could be used again for a liturgical catechesis of the parents.

The structure of these presentations is simple. First there is an admonition, by the priest for the Creed and by the deacon for the Our Father. Then the text is proclaimed, with commentary, at the end for the Creed and after each petition for the Our Father.[11] It is a direct and effective catechetical method. The catechumens are expected to learn the text by heart.

The titles are: *Incipit Praefatio Symboli ad electos; Item Praefatio orationis dominicae.* The word *Praefatio* refers to the introductory formula.[12] The commentaries give certain details that indicate their antiquity, as is shown, for example, by the rubrics, which are in the second person singular. The second part of the *Praefatio Symboli* would seem to be more recent, as suggested by the term *presbyter* and the rubric in the third person singular.

[11] We should note that the text used is that of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, not the Apostles Creed.

[12] Without contradicting the article by C. Mohrmann, "Sur l'histoire de praefari, praefatio," *VC* 7 (1953) 1–15, these facts add some necessary nuances to her statements.

The content of the two catecheses is rich. It has been preserved over the centuries and is also used by the *OICA.* Scholars have tried to determine the author of these catecheses. For the Creed, De Puniet, after comparing the language of Pope Leo with that of the Gelasian text, concludes by attributing the text to Leo the Great or a Leonine school.[13] For the catechesis on the Our Father, De Puniet considered three authors: Tertullian, Cyprian, and Chromatius of Aquileia. More recent studies, which have discovered the original text of Chromatius's commentary on the Our Father, show that he is not the author of the text of the Gelasian catechesis. However, the latter may depend on him, at least in part.[14]

5. XLII, 419–424: rites for Holy Saturday morning. There is a laying of the hand on the child's head with an exorcism (419), then the *ephphetha,* which is done here with saliva, first on the nostrils, then on the ears (this fact was not mentioned in the earlier books). The significance of anointing the nostrils is special: *in odorem suavitatis,* the theme of the *bonus odor* of the Canticle of Canticles. We see that the interpretation of receiving the word in the ears in order to proclaim it with the mouth is mistaken. The current ritual, for pastoral reasons and because of possible misunderstanding of the rite, has clearly forsaken the tradition.

There follows the anointing of the breast and shoulders and the renunciation, which is done by each one individually: each one is called by name. The candidate renounces Satan, *operibus eius et pompis eius* (421). Finally, the elect are invited to recite the Creed *(redditio Symboli),* while the priest imposes his hand on their head.

[13] P. de Puniet, "Les trois homélies catéchétiques du sacramentaire gélasien," *RHE* 5 (1904) 770–786. Here are some references to critical editions that did not exist when the author was writing. Leo the Great, *Serm.* 62, 2: CCL 1838A, 377; *Serm.* 77: CCL 188A, 493; *Serm.* 96, 1: CCL 138A, 594; *Serm.* 28, 6: CCL 138, 144; *Serm.* 66, 4: CCL 138A, 405; *Serm.* 76, 8: CCL 138A, 484.

[14] De Puniet, "Les trois homélies," *RHE* 6 (1905) 15–18. In 1957 A. Hoste published the sermon *Chromatii Aquileiensis quae supersunt: Praefatio orationis dominicae,* CCL 9, 443–447. In 1969, 1971, R. Etaix and R. Lemarié discovered the original of Chromatius's commentary on the Our Father and published it in SCh 164, 223–229; later they published it in CCL 9A, 171–173. M. Tode, "Cromazio di Aquileia, Sermoni liturgici," *Letture cristiane delle origini* 18, Texts (Rome, 1982), concludes that the Gelasian catechesis is not by Chromatius.

6. XLIV, 443–452: blessing of the baptismal water, baptism and confirmation. With regard to the blessing of the water, there is a short formula in *Ve*[15] that refers to the Holy Spirit hovering over the primordial waters and over the waters of the Jordan. Note an original expression: *ut sit manus tua in hanc aquam.*[16] The text is complicated and can be divided into independent paragraphs. Paragraph 3: . . . *ut unius eiusdemque elementi mysterio et finis esset viciis et origo virtutum* (445, p. 72, ll. 29–30) has its parallel in Tertullian[17] and in *Ve.*[18] Peter Chrysologus preached several sermons on the same theme.[19] Paragraph 4 (*Respice in faciem Ecclesiae . . . gratia mater infantia*—445, p. 72, l. 31) has parallels in the sermons of Peter Chrysologus.[20] Paragraph 8 (448) contains an epiclesis addressed to the Father, but it is not accompanied by gestures as in *GrH.*

Baptism is conferred with the three questions on faith and the triple immersion. Upon coming out of the font, the catechumen is anointed by the priest on the crown of the head *de chrismate his verbis.* The prayer that follows reproduces the one we have seen in Ambrose's *De sacramentis,* a simple declarative formula of the rite that has been performed.

Confirmation[21] is conferred by the bishop.[22] The rubric deserves attention: *Deinde ab episcopo datur eis spiritum septiformis: Ad consignandum imponit eis manum in his verbis. "Imponit eis manum"* does not in itself mean that the hand is laid on all together; in fact, the same rubric

[15] *Ve,* 1331.

[16] Ibid., 1331, p. 170, l. 22.

[17] *De baptismo* 4, 1; CCL 1, 279.

[18] *Ve,* 1331, p. 72, l. 19, but the whole text must be read.

[19] F. Lanzoni, *Benedictio fontis et sermones Petri Chrisologi, Rassegna Gregoriana* (1908) 425.

[20] Peter Chrysologus, *Serm.* 146: PL 52:583B; *Serm.* 166: PL 52:635A. But the fact is interpreted in different ways by S. Benz, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Textes der römischen Taufwasserweihe," *RBén* 66 (1956) 213: Peter Chrysologus is the author of the blessing. For A. Olivar, "Vom Ursprung der römischen Taufwasserweihe," *ALW* 6 (1949) 62–78, the parallelism is due to memorization on the part of Peter Chrysologus, who borrows terms from this blessing. The text was known in the fifth century in Ravenna but was composed in Rome. The arguments for this second thesis appear sound.

[21] We meet the term "confirmation" around the fifth century in Gaul; in Rome the term *consignatio* is used.

[22] *GeV,* 451, 452.

is found for the rite of signing. But obviously each candidate had to be signed individually: *Postea signat eos in fronte de chrismate.* The prayer that accompanies the laying on of the hand expresses the seven gifts of the Spirit, as St. Ambrose had implied. It is easy to see that the important gesture in the celebration of chrismation is the laying on of the hand (451). The text of the prayer would remain unchanged until our rituals. Then the signing takes place with the simple indicative formula: *Signum Christi in vitam aeternam. Amen.* The kiss of peace follows. The Eucharistic celebration that completes initiation begins with the *Gloria in excelsis Deo.* The ritual does not emphasize this first Eucharist.

Second Stage of Composition
This includes sections LXVI–LXXVI, 592–617. It contains the ritual for initiation on the Saturday of Pentecost along with rituals for various situations, specifically for the sick.

Third Stage of Composition
1. XXIX, 282–284: *Denuntiatio pro scrutinio quod tertia hebdomada in quadragesima secunda feria initiatur.* We have seen the meaning of this rubric, which contradicts the previous rubrics.

2. XXIV, 209–309. This includes the presentation of the Gospels, which the Gelasian gives as the first presentation (299–309); in fact, it comes in the ritual's third stage of composition. Here the title is *Incipit expositio;* in fact it is a *Praefatio.* But the title continues: *In aurium apertione ad electos.* This does not mean that this presentation took place at the time of the *ephphetha.* What we have here is a more recent Roman introduction, which is not without pastoral value. Four deacons enter, each one carrying an evangeliary. Upon reaching the altar, they place one evangeliary at each of its corners. The presider explains briefly what a Gospel is. Then one of the deacons proclaims the first verses of one of the Gospels, and the presider gives a brief commentary summarizing and highlighting the characteristics of the Gospel proclaimed and the evangelist. The same rite is repeated for the other three Gospels. This seems to be a good model for pastoral liturgy.

C. *ORDO ROMANUS* XI

Ordo XI belongs to the same period as the *GeV* but is the courageous expression of a ritual adapted to new circumstances. The *GeV* was composed primarily for the initiation of children. It seems that such a ritual scheme was kept, not for purely archaic reasons, but in re-

sponse to a historical-religious decline in Christian life, which called for serious preparation through catechesis within the framework of a liturgy.

Ordo XI seems to confirm the existence of such a situation, and it carefully opted for the maximum preparation of parents and godparents for their child's initiation. Thus, although it follows the Gelasian ritual, it duplicates the three scrutinies, keeping the rites of admission and enrollment of names, and the various preparatory rites of the catechumenate as in the *GeV,* except the last two prayers of section XXX, 286–287. It also keeps the three presentations.[23] A separate place is prescribed for the children during the celebration when their presence is not needed.

The three first scrutinies that come from the *GeV* are original; the three others are simply repetitions of these. The scrutinies, however, take place between the prayer and the reading. For the first scrutiny, Wednesday of the third week, the reading is Ezekiel 36:25-29: *Effundam super vos aquam mundam.* After the reading the catechumens leave. The Gospel is chosen expressly because of the adaptation made by *Ordo* XI: Matthew 11:25-30, which speaks of God's revelation to the little ones. The second scrutiny is celebrated on an unspecified day during the fourth week of Lent. The exorcisms are the previous ones. But there are two readings entitled *Ad aurium apertionem,* which are a collection of texts: Isaiah 55:2-7; Colossians 3:9; Romans 10:18. Linked to this scrutiny is the presentation of the Gospels, with the restored formula of the *GeV.* Also linked to it is the presentation of the Creed and the Our Father.

The fourth and fifth scrutinies are celebrated during the fifth week, but the days are not fixed. The sixth scrutiny takes place on an unspecified day during the sixth week of Lent and repeats the first scrutiny. The seventh scrutiny consists of the *ephphetha* and the renunciation. This is not a scrutiny per se, but *Ordo* XI is anxious to have seven scrutinies, "according to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit." Next follows the blessing of the baptismal water and the baptism; these are not described here. This is followed by confirmation, whose ritual is not specified. For the concluding rites of baptism and confirmation we would need to consult *Ordo* XXVII for Holy Week. This *Ordo,*

[23] M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge,* vol. 2: *L'Ordo XI* (Louvain, 1960) 363–447.

however, goes back to the second half of the eighth century. We could also look at *Ordo* XV, but this is from the eighth century.

It is expected that the *infantes* will receive communion: *hoc prevedendum est ne, postquam baptizati fuerint ullum cibum accipiant neque ablactentur antequam communicent.*

Ordo XI definitely shows a great concern for pastoral questions. It must have been very effective in preparing parents for the baptism of their children. But this concern prevented anyone from noticing that the innovations were destroying the paschal arrangement of the Sundays of Lent. On the other hand, we see either a lack of imagination or a certain laziness, leading to euchological and ritual repetitions that could cause those taking part in the rite to become bored. We note also the accumulations: the third scrutiny and the three presentations. There was a desire to multiply scrutinies so as to have seven of them, but on the other hand it was felt necessary to limit the meetings to some extent.

At most, *Ordo* XI might serve as a model to be adapted and perhaps a guide for catechizing parents today. But the entire ritual would have to be revised according to pastoral criteria and with a sense of what is possible.

D. THE GREGORIAN SACRAMENTARY. THE SUPPLEMENT

The *GrH*, which was sent to Charlemagne around the end of the eighth century, no longer includes actual scrutinies, but rather groups of exorcisms. The first: *Benedictio salis, Oratio ad catechumenum faciendum*[24] is what is left of the first scrutiny of the *GeV* and *Ordo* XI. But this celebration is not linked to Lent at all. The second group, the presentation of the Gospels, is celebrated during Lent.[25] At least this celebration was still considered useful for the catechesis of the parents or any adults who were preparing for their initiation. The third group includes the celebrations for Holy Saturday morning: *redditio Symboli* and *ephphetha*, etc.[26] The body of the *GrH* contains no information about the baptismal formula. But for baptism of the sick there is the

[24] J. Deshusses, *Le sacramentaire grégorien, ses principales formes d'après les plus manuscrits les anciens*, vol. 1: *Le sacramentaire. Le Supplément d'Aniane*, SF 16 (Fribourg, 1971) 356–357.

[25] *GrH*, 358.

[26] Ibid., 359–360. Note the words *ad pisteugis,* the first example of Greek written in Latin characters in the *GeV.*

formula *Ille talis, baptizo te in nomine Patris.*[27] In 744 Pope Zachary decreed the use of this formula;[28] it is justified by the fact that the candidates cannot respond to the threefold interrogation about their faith.

Thus the *GrH* is evidence of the abandonment of celebrations considered important by the *GeV* and *Ordo* XI for the pastoral care of Christians of their time. Perhaps the age of Charlemagne was regarded —not without delusion—as a time when Christianity had no problems.

As for the *Supplement* to the Gregorian Sacramentary *(GrS),* it had grouped into a single celebration the entrance into the catechumenate, the exorcisms, the rites for Holy Saturday, and baptism with the possibility of confirmation.[29] The baptismal formula is as follows: *Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris. . . .* A new practice appears: *Et vestitur infans vestimentis suis,*[30] but this is not the white garment. There is nothing about the rite itself of confirmation, but there is a very important rubric: *Si vero episcopus adest statim confirmari eum opportet chrismate et postea communicare.*[31]

e. the gelasian of the eighth century

Here we shall consider the two main forms of the Gelasian of the eighth century.

1) The Gellone Sacramentary[32] contains two baptismal rituals. The first *ordo* is a compromise between the *GeV* and *Ordo* XI.[33] Its text is rather confused and incomplete.[34] There are not many details. For example, the priest asks about belief in the three divine Persons while laying his hand on the catechumen's head. This takes place on Saturday, at the time of the *redditio Symboli.*[35] At the moment of baptism and before the immersion, the priest asks again about belief in the three divine Persons.[36] Baptism takes place by triple immersion with the

[27] Ibid., 982. But critics consider this text an interpolation.
[28] *Litterae ad Bonifacium:* PL 89:929.
[29] *GrH,* 1065–1089.
[30] Ibid., 1087.
[31] Ibid., 1088.
[32] *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis,* ed. A. Dumas and J. Deshusses, CCL 159, *Textus;* J. Deshusses, *Introductio, Tabulae et Indices,* CCL 159A (Turnhout, 1981).
[33] The first *Ordo:* 395–410; 525–532; 533–564; 667–674; 702–714.
[34] See J. Deshusses, *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis, Introductio,* CCL 159A, XXX.
[35] *GeG,* 671.
[36] Ibid., 706–707.

formula *Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris.* There are new rites for the blessing of the water: *Hic mittis cereos in fontes, et insufflas in aquas ter vicibus hoc modo. Descendant. . . .*[37] Confirmation follows through the laying on of the bishop's hand with the Gelasian formula and the *signatio* with sacred chrism, also with the Gelasian formula. It may be noted that when, for reasons of necessity, baptism has been conferred without being followed by confirmation, this is considered negligence. A rubric warns: *Hoc autem precaventes ut hoc non neglegatur, quia tunc omne baptismum christianitatis nomine confirmatur.*[38]

2) The Angoulême Sacramentary[39] is also a compromise between the *GeV* and *Ordo* XI, but the copyist has not transcribed the actual rite of baptism. After the blessing of the water, he gives the prayer for the anointing when the child comes out of the baptismal font. There is the rite of confirmation with the same rites and formulas.

II. FROM THE TENTH CENTURY TO THE RITUAL OF PAUL V (1614)

A. THE ROMAN-GERMANIC PONTIFICAL OF THE TENTH CENTURY

This pontifical shows us that despite efforts to introduce the *GrH* which omits the scrutinies, the latter continued to be used here and there according to the newly felt need for catechesis of the parents within the framework of a catechetical liturgy. The *Pontificale Romano-Germanicum (PRG)* of the tenth century[40] included the *Ordo Romanus antiquus,* which had borrowed from *Ordo* XI but with certain additions.[41]

Before transcribing the *Ordo scrutiniorum,* the *PRG* transcribed an *Ordo in quarta ebdomada quadragesimae et in quarta feria.* This is the third scrutiny, considered the most important, and on this day: *Tanguntur aures et nares catechumenorum digitis presbiterorum; eadem die instruuntur de auctoribus et initiis IVor evangeliorum; eadem die percipiunt orationem dominicam et simbolum ad redendum in sabbato sancto Paschae.*[42] The next paragraph provides for the blessing of ashes for those who will

[37] Ibid., 704d.

[38] Ibid., 712.

[39] *Liber sacramentorum Engolismensis,* ed. P. Saint-Roch, CCL 159C.

[40] Ed. C. Vogel and R. Elze, ST 226–227 (Vatican City, 1963).

[41] This *Ordo Romanus antiquus,* edited by Hittorp, has been edited by M. Andrieu as *Ordo L* and in the *PRG,* vol. 2, XCIX.

[42] *PRG,* vol. 2, XCIX, 81.

undergo the scrutinies. Two optional prayers are provided for this blessing. Only then does the *Ordo scrutinii* begin. *Ordo* XI is followed, but the children undergo a renunciation of Satan and are questioned about their belief in the three divine Persons. The prayer for the blessing of the water is here preceded by the Preface dialogue. Signs of the cross are introduced, and the paschal candle is immersed in the water at the words *Descendat in hanc plenitudinem fontis virtus Spiritus sancti.* For baptism there are two sources, very similar to each other. In the first,[43] the renunciation precedes baptism; then comes an interrogation on belief in the three divine Persons. This is followed by an anointing *inter scapulas et in pectore* and baptism by immersion with the formula *Ego te baptizo. . . .* In the second source[44] we find the same thing but there is no renunciation.

Regarding confirmation, we may note that the bishop no longer lays his hand on the head of each one, but of all together with the Gelasian prayer. This is followed by the anointing. The deacons ask the one to be confirmed his or her name, and the bishop traces a sign of the cross on each candidate's forehead, saying: *Confirmo te et consigno te in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.* The bishop then exchanges a sign of peace and says: *Ecce sic benedicetur homo qui timet Dominum,* etc. A concluding prayer is provided: *Deus qui apostolis tuis dedisti Spiritum,* followed by a long formula of blessing. The children receive communion.

The *PRG* gives us an *Ordo* that unites in the same celebration the entrance into the catechumenate, the exorcisms, the celebration of Holy Saturday morning, and the three sacraments.[45]

From now on we will find that this last *Ordo* is the one normally used. It unites all the celebrations, including confirmation and communion, into a single celebration.

b. twelfth- and thirteenth-century pontificals and the pontifical of william durandus

It would be of no use to dwell on each of these liturgical books. They contain few original or important elements. We note some of them. Sacred chrism is poured into the water for its consecration.[46] After

[43] Ibid., vol. 2, 372, source C.

[44] Ibid., vol. 2, 373, source K.

[45] Ibid., vol. 2, CVII, 155–164.

[46] *PR XII,* M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical romain au moyen âge,* vol. 1: *Le Pontifical du XII^e siècle,* ST 86 (Vatican City, 1938).

immersion, the baptized receives a white garment with the words *Accipe vestem candidam, quam perferas ante tribunal Domini nostri Iesu Christi. . . .*[47] Then the baptized is given a candle.[48] Confirmation is conferred if the bishop is able to be present. The anointing is conferred with a modified version of the formula of the *PRG,* one that will be used until Vatican II: *Signo te signo crucis et confirmo te chrismate salutis, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.*[49] Communion follows. We should note that if a child cannot eat or drink, communion is given *sive cum folio, sive cum digito intincto in sanguine Domini et posito in ore ipsorum dicendo: Corpus cum sanguine domini nostri Iesu Christi custodiat te in vitam aeternam. Amen*.[50] The *PR* XIII and the *PGD* do not give the ritual for baptism. The practice is for the bishop to give confirmation to candidates baptized by the priests. Since the celebration of confirmation is very short when it is isolated in this way, hymns, chants, and prayers are introduced at the beginning and end to create a more substantial rite. The *PGD,* in place of the kiss of peace given by the bishop, introduces a slap on the cheek. This corresponds to the theology of the time, which saw confirmation as strength to bear witness to the faith: the candidate is like a knight who is leaving for the crusade and receives the rite of investiture. We also note that the bishop lays his hand on all the candidates together.

C. THIRTEENTH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

In the thirteenth century, although it was normally prescribed that baptism be conferred only on Holy Saturday and the Vigil of Pentecost, many dioceses introduced the custom of baptizing immediately after birth because of widespread infant mortality. This would still be the rule in the mid-twentieth century. In some dioceses where it was prescribed that infants be baptized within three days of birth, delay was punished—for example by refusal to announce the baptism by ringing the bells of the parish church.

[47] Ibid., XII, p. 246.

[48] Ibid., XII, p. 246: A practice already mentioned in the *Ordo* of Jumièges, ed. E. Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, 4 vols. (Lyon, 1690–1706; 2nd ed. Antwerp, 1736–1738) 1.1, c. 1, a. 18; A.-G. Martimort, ed., *L'Eglise en prière: Introduction à la liturgie,* new ed. (Paris, 1983–1984) 424 (English edition: *The Church at Prayer,* one vol. ed. [Collegeville, Minnesota, 1992]).

[49] Ibid., XII, p. 247.

[50] Ibid., XII, p. 246.

In the same century, baptism by infusion almost always replaces baptism by immersion because it is more practical. This was to become general practice in the fourteenth century, although baptism by immersion was still possible.

Again in the thirteenth century it was forbidden to give communion to children until *ad annos discretionis.*[51] Interpretations of this expression varied. Seven years? Twelve years? Confirmation was conferred when there was an opportunity to arrange for it.

D. FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PONTIFICALS AND RITUALS

In 1485 the bishop of Chiusi, A. Patrizi Piccolomini, produced the first printed edition of the *Pontificale Romanum.* This work was completed at the request of Pope Innocent VIII and with the collaboration of the master of ceremonies Giovanni Burckard.[52] For all practical purposes, the book repeats the *PGD,* removing what ordinarily pertains to the priest and keeping what pertains to the bishop. This book was copied many times before 1595, when Clement VIII promulgated the *Pontificale Romanum.*

As far as the ritual is concerned, we might wonder how a priest was able to celebrate a baptism, for example. All that existed in this regard were some scattered books: *Manuale, Liber sacerdotalis,* etc. Finally in 1523 Alberto Castellani published the *Liber sacerdotalis* in Venice. But the work was private in nature. Pope Paul V asked Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santori, bishop of Santa Severina, to begin study for a ritual.[53] The work was published after the Cardinal's death in 1602. Although it was praised by the Pope, it was not accepted but used only as a source (sometimes *ad litteram*) for the ritual that was published later. The Cardinal had considered copying *Ordo* XI, but this plan was not acceptable.

Pope Paul V published the *Rituale Romanum* in 1614. This ritual was to be used until Vatican II. For the initiation of adults, the three sacraments are not necessarily joined in the same celebration, and three abbreviated scrutinies are performed without interruption. For children, the ritual for baptism includes three exorcisms, remnants of the three scrutinies of the *GeV.* Neither confirmation nor the Eucharist follows.

[51] A decision based on canon 21 of the Lateran Council of 1215: DS 812.

[52] P. de Puniet, *Le Pontifical romain* (Louvain, 1930) 1:55–62.

[53] G. Zanon, "Il rituale di Brescia di 1570, modello del Rituale romano di Paolo V," *Traditio et Progressio,* SA 95 (1989) 643–681.

In the sixteenth century it was recommended that confirmation not be given before the age of seven. In the eighteenth century some dioceses, in order to assure adequate preparation for confirmation, postponed its conferral until after first communion. What we see here is a profound change in the way of conceiving confirmation. If in the past confirmation had been conferred after the Eucharist, this was only because of the absence of the bishop. It still remained clear that the Eucharist was the crowning of initiation. But now the order among the three sacraments of initiation is being modified for simple catechetical reasons. When in 1910 the decree *Quam singulari* proposed that first communion be given around the age of seven, the inversion of confirmation and the Eucharist became increasingly common. In this way, it can be said, the meaning of initiation was lost, and the three sacraments that comprise it were considered separately. Meanwhile, the very meaning of confirmation was becoming increasingly unclear.

III. CHRISTIAN INITIATION: VATICAN II

At the time of Vatican II the need for revision of the sacraments of Christian initiation appeared increasingly urgent. There was a felt lack of a true ritual of initiation for adults and a ritual adapted to the baptism of children. The ritual for adults was composed of elements taken from archaic records that were inauthentic, and the ritual for children was an abbreviation of the adult ritual with no adaptation at all.

A. THE CHOICES OF THE CONSILIUM

Following the principles laid down by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia* was supposed to begin a historical investigation. Based on its understanding of the Church's present situation, it had to try to create a ritual adapted to modern times, which, while remaining faithful to tradition, would introduce certain changes yet not cause undue confusion among clergy and faithful.

The Consilium wanted to restore the meaning of initiation and its three sacraments, which were to be reunited, at least in desire and, in certain rites, in actual fact. Thus the General Introduction had to offer a theology of the three sacraments of initiation.[54] The various rites

[54] Strangely, this theology was proposed in the Introduction to the *OBP,* where as a rule the three sacraments are not given together; it was not to be found in the

(OICA, OBP, and *OC)* appeared in succession, but a ritual would have to be published: Christian initiation as it emerges from the *OICA,* the *OC,* and the *OBP.* Since the theology of confirmation was not entirely convincing and pastoral practice much debated, no thought could be given to conferring the three sacraments on a child, as had been the practice even in the thirteenth century. Thus the three sacraments had to be separated for the *OBP.*

The *OICA,* on the other hand, was able to restore the ancient structure. There were two possible models, both actually composed for children: the *GeV* and *Ordo* XI. The choice fell on the *GeV,* with adaptations of certain rites and formulas. The *Ordo lectionum* adapted to the Sunday scrutinies has been restored in Cycle A for Lent. The *OPB* of 1614, a caricature of the old *GeV,* had to be revised. Provision was made for the celebration of baptism between the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist. An *Ordo lectionum* was also created with more suitable readings. Finally, provision was made to celebrate the confirmation of children, apart from baptism, between the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist. An *Ordo lectionum* was studied. Certain rites were modified, as well as certain formulas. A rubrical style of introduction was decisively abandoned in order to enter into the theology that flows from the celebration itself. In fact, the General Introduction can serve as a rich and fruitful source for a catechesis of Christian initiation. This is something new. In itself it gives these rituals an originality that will modify the theology of sacramental catechesis in a profound way, causing it to begin from the celebration itself and thus offering a vital treasure.

B. THE *ORDO INITIATIONIS CHRISTIANAE ADULTORUM (OICA)*

1. *The General Introduction*

We will focus on just a few main points. The second edition (1974) of the *OICA* contains the liturgical theology of the unity of the three sacraments of initiation (*OICA* 7–13). The general presentation of the structure of the *OICA* is noteworthy: (1) the period of first evangelization and the precatechumenate; (2) the period of integral catechesis for three years; (3) the period of immediate preparation and purification for sacramental "illumination"; (4) the three sacraments; (5) the

OICA, where the three sacraments usually are conferred together. This anomaly has been corrected in the second edition of the *OICA.*

"mystagogia." Many elements that have been recovered were already found in the *Traditio Apostolica,* attributed to Hippolytus of Rome and written in 217. The choice is based on the conviction that the steps envisioned by this ancient discipline are not linked to a particular historical period but are of lasting value, even though their use today presupposes an adaptation of the rites and formulas.

Although the General Introduction is concerned with the ministers of initiation and their role, for the first time in centuries the community and the faithful are taken into consideration, and the community is once again involved in the preparation of the catechumens. The bishop must regulate the catechesis, but there is great emphasis on the importance of the catechists. Also to be noted is the relative freedom permitted to those using the *OICA:* a variety of formulas, admonitions, and prayer intentions are left to the free choice of the presider, etc.

2. *The Various Stages*

First stage

This consists of entrance into the community, which should be present so that the rite of welcome may correspond to the reality. Here the *OICA* is particularly creative. The candidate is asked to make a first commitment, but before that those who have presented the candidate to the Church are questioned. A new prayer is provided, praising God for having called those who were knocking at the door. All respond with an acclamation.

The rite of signing, or *signatio,* is highlighted as a sign of God's love and the strength to follow him. Here we have an important innovation: those in charge of the catechumenate and the catechists may trace the sign of the cross on the candidate, a sign that may also be made on the ears, eyes, mouth and breast. Two options are given for the concluding prayer. One is from the *GeV;*[55] the other is a new composition, perhaps less theological and somewhat moralizing, adapted to the new situation of the catechumens in their following of Christ.

Then the candidates are led into the church, where from now on they will take part in the table of God's Word (*OICA* 90). An antiphon is sung: *Venite, filii, audite me: timorem Domini docebo vos* ("Come, my

[55] *GeV,* 286. Concerning the corrupt text, see note 6 above.

children, and listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord") with some verses from Psalm 33 (34). To express all this concretely, there is a celebration of the Word. The book of the Scriptures is carried in procession and may be incensed, if desired. The readings may be those of the Mass or others, with responsories. Another new rite is also introduced, though it is not obligatory: the presentation of the book of Gospels to the catechumen. Crosses may also be distributed (*OICA* 93). Next comes a prayer for the catechumens in the form of general intercessions with the concluding prayer *Deus Patrum nostrorum . . .*, taken from the *GeV*.[56] Another new prayer recalls the creation of man and woman in the image of God, an image that must be recovered (*OICA* 95).

The catechumens must deepen their faith, normally for three years. During this time celebrations of the Word are provided (*OICA* 106–108), as well as minor exorcisms (*OICA* 109–118; 372). The catechist, even if a layperson, may repeat these several times according to the needs of the catechumens. All this is taken from the *Traditio Apostolica.* Besides these exorcisms, there are numerous formulas for blessings to be given at the end of celebrations of the Word; in special cases, these may even be given privately (*OICA* 119–124; 373). Another innovation is the possibility of presenting the Creed (*OICA* 125–126) and the Lord's Prayer (*OICA* 188–192). The rite of *ephphetha* (*OICA* 200–202) may also be performed. There is also provision for an anointing with the oil of catechumens on the hands, with an adapted formula (*OICA* 127–130).

These creations show that an archaic attitude has been avoided. But all these new rites could obscure the more essential rites; we should note that the catechumens, despite these rites, are not yet *electi.* For those who are coming from paganism, there are provisions for the renunciation of non-Christian worship (*OICA* 78–81), but the form and public nature of this renunciation depend on the episcopal conferences. The same holds true for the giving of a Christian name (*OICA* 88).

Second stage

a) The rite of election or enrollment of names

This rite marks the end of the catechumenate; the candidate joins the category of the elect. The entire community is invited to give its

[56] Ibid., 290.

opinion as to the candidate's readiness. The rite of admission is normally celebrated after the homily on the first Sunday of Lent. The readings should be those of Cycle A for Lent. These readings are well suited to the occasion. The Church does not hide from the elect their sinful condition (Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7, first reading). But even though men and women have been overcome by evil, Christ our head has overcome temptation (Matt 4:1-11, gospel reading). The second reading is positive and encouraging: where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more (Rom 5:12-19).

The godparents, whom until now the ritual has called sponsors, are questioned as to whether the candidates have faithfully listened to God's word, about their efforts to walk in God's presence and their efforts to seek the fellowship of the community (*OICA* 135–155). Then the candidates are questioned; they ask to be admitted to proximate preparation for initiation. Next there is a prayer for them in the form of general intercessions, which conclude with the Gelasian prayer *Deus, qui humani generis ita es conditor*[57] (*OICA* 149). Another new prayer is provided as an option to the celebrant. The elect are dismissed. This is not an archaism; it rightly stresses their inability to take part in the Eucharist before they have received Christian initiation.

b) The period of purification and illumination

1) The scrutinies. The model chosen is that of the *GeV.* The first scrutiny took place, and still takes place today, on the third Sunday[58] after the homily of the Eucharistic celebration, in which the readings from the Lenten Cycle A are obligatory. The mystery of water and the renewal of the temple and worship are described (John 4:5-42). The homily should focus on the renewal brought by Jesus, beginning with Cana, where the water becomes wine (John 2:1-11), moving to the dia-

[57] Ibid., 287.

[58] The renewed ritual is perhaps a bit archaic here. The second Sunday, which used to have a scrutiny, as is seen, for example, in the liturgy of Benevento (see above, p. 52), has been bypassed. Because of the introduction of the Ember Days and the celebration on Saturday evening, the morning celebration for the second Sunday was dropped *(Dominica vacat).* But note that in the *GeV* there is a Mass for the second Sunday. We should not forget the lesson of the second Sunday: the transfigured Christ is declared God's Son and beloved (Matt 17:1-9). Abraham responds to God's call and becomes father of the people of God (Gen 12:1-4, first reading). We are all called to be transfigured; it is our holy vocation (2 Tim 1:8-10, second reading).

logue with Nicodemus, the new person born of water and the Spirit (John 3:1-20), emphasizing John 3:15-16: "The Son of Man has come down from heaven so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

In the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, water becomes a bearer of grace; whoever drinks this water will never thirst again. There will be a new temple made up of all the baptized, and a new worship in spirit and truth. The gospel is linked to the first reading (Exod 7:3-7): the water of Mount Horeb saves the people in the desert. For the baptized, the love of God has been "poured out" into their hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:1-2, 5, 8, second reading). The exorcism takes place after the homily. The godparents stand with the elect before the celebrant. The elect are asked to bow their heads or kneel. The prayer, in the form of general intercessions, concludes with a new prayer that refers to the water that renews and heals (*OICA* 162–164, 376–378). The elect are dismissed and the Eucharist begins.

The second scrutiny is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent. The gospel of the man born blind (John 9:1-4) tells the elect what is taking place in them. Their eyes are being opened from darkness to the light, and they will become light. As David was chosen and anointed king (1 Sam 16:1-4, 6-7, 10, 13), so the baptized will be chosen and anointed by God. The baptized will rise from the dead and Christ will give them light (Eph 5:8-15, second reading). The rite is the same as that for the third Sunday. The prayers of exorcism refer to the man born blind and to the light conferred by the sacraments of initiation (*OICA* 167–172, 383).

The third scrutiny follows the same rites and takes place on the fifth Sunday of Lent. The readings focus on the goal toward which the elect are moving. The gospel recounts the resurrection of Lazarus, a type of Christ's resurrection and that of all the baptized who are called to new life (John 11:1-45). The second reading states that the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus dwells in us (Rom 8:8-11). The prayers of exorcism repeat these themes. We should note that on these Sundays of the scrutinies the Preface takes up the theme of the readings, the *Memento* of the living prays especially for the godparents, while the *Hanc igitur* mentions the names of those who will be baptized. For those who are already baptized and able to take part in the Eucharist, the communion antiphon repeats the theme of the gospel, thus sacramentalizing the word proclaimed.

2) The presentations. As indicated above, the presentations may take place during the period preceding the purification. More commonly, the presentation of the profession of faith (*OICA* 186–187) will take place during the week after the first scrutiny. Note that all the suggested readings (*OICA* 185) refer to faith. After the presentation, the celebrant concludes with the Gelasian prayer: *Aeternam ac iustissimam pietatem tuam.*[59] The presentation of the Lord's Prayer (*OICA* 188–192) is celebrated during the week after the third scrutiny, with the suggested readings. The presentation of the Our Father takes place with the proclamation of Matthew 6:9-13. The celebration concludes with an invitation to pray and the oration *Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui ecclesiam tuam nova semper prole fecundas* from the *GeV.*[60]

3) The final rites before initiation. At least some of these are celebrated on Holy Saturday morning: the *Redditio Simboli* (if the Creed was not presented, the *Redditio* is omitted). Before the *Redditio* there is a new prayer, inspired by the *GeV: Da, quaesumus, Domine, electis nostris, qui consilium caritatis tuae . . .* (*OICA* 194–198). The *Redditio* follows (*OICA* 199). Suitable readings are suggested. Another rite is the *ephphetha.* The rite is meant to stress the need for grace in order to be able to hear God's word and proclaim it (*OICA* 200). The ritual makes a change in prescribing that the ears and mouth be touched (no longer the nostrils). For the choice of a Christian name (*OICA* 203–205), readings are suggested that focus on the importance of a name (John 1:40-42: "You are to be called Cephas"). Finally there is the anointing with the oil of catechumens (*OICA* 206–207). If the episcopal conference retains this rite, it can be done on Holy Saturday, and the priest may bless the oil for pastoral reasons. But the anointing may be done, as we will see, during the Easter Vigil.

Third stage

This includes the rites of initiation itself: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist.

a) Celebration of baptism (*OICA* 210–226)

1) Blessing of the water. This is preceded by the singing of the litany, to which are added the names of the patron saints of those to be baptized.

[59] *GeV*, 298.

[60] Ibid., 409.

The formula for blessing the water, inspired by the *GeV,* is a modern composition and is clearer and more concise. It mentions the types of baptism and is a living catechesis in itself. After recalling that God foreshadowed the waters of baptism in many ways, it lists the many types: the waters of creation, the flood, the Red Sea and the Jordan; the water that flowed from the side of Christ on the cross; and finally the baptismal water into which the Spirit descends (*OICA* 215). For pastoral reasons and to encourage the participation of the faithful, two other formulas have been created and provided with acclamations (*OICA* 389). Unfortunately, these new formulas do not mention the types that foreshadow the waters of baptism. It would be better to use the first formula, inserting an acclamation after each type.

2) The renunciation (*OICA* 217) presents three formulas. The first is a single sentence with the single response: "I do." The second is the Gelasian formula. The third is meant to be more concrete, and in this it is successful. These formulas may be adapted according to the judgment of the episcopal conferences. The word *pompae,* which comes from the Greco-Roman culture, is not easy to translate into modern languages. It means not only lust but anything that would be extravagant luxury, idolatrous processions, consumerism. The French translation *séduction* could limit the word to a sexual meaning. An anointing is provided for but may take place before or after the renunciation, depending on the various rites. When it precedes the renunciation, the anointing could signify the strength needed for renunciation; this would be its role according to the *GeV.*[61] The anointing is done on the breast, hands, or even other parts of the body. Episcopal conferences may omit it if there is reason to think it will not be understood.

3) Profession of faith (*OICA* 219). Despite the common practice of infant baptism, the interrogatory formula on belief in the three divine Persons with triple immersion was kept until the eighth-century Gelasian, where the formula is *Ego te baptizo. . . .* The questions about faith were really a dialogue with the godparents. Substituting them with a new formula was perfectly normal. We may ask why the *OICA,* a ritual specifically for adults, did not restore the interrogatory formula, which stresses in the very act of baptism the gift of faith and its active acceptance on the part of the baptized. We can probably say

[61] Ibid, 421.

that a theology too anchored to the matter and form of the sacramental sign put a halt to a possible and very beautiful restoration of the original form of the baptismal rite.

4) Baptism (*OICA* 220–222) is therefore conferred with the formula *Ego te baptizo. . . .* Baptism can be either by immersion or infusion. Immersion recovers the perfect meaning of the sign: to be born of water and the Spirit. The godparents place their right hand on the right shoulder of the elect. As the newly baptized comes out of the font, the faithful express their joy with an acclamation or song. If the number to be baptized is large, several priests and deacons may baptize.

5) Postbaptismal anointing (*OICA* 224). We have met this anointing in the *Traditio Apostolica.* This anointing, made by the priest with chrism on the crown of the head, seems to have been an illustration of what had taken place sacramentally. We have seen the formula that accompanies this anointing in the *De sacramentis* of St. Ambrose. The formula was kept almost identical until the present new ritual, which has introduced into Ambrose's formula a reference to the sharing of the baptized in the priesthood of Christ, in accord with the General Introduction, which stresses the conferral of the priesthood of the faithful at this moment.[62] The rubric which, contrary to ancient tradition, omits the anointing and its formula when confirmation immediately follows may seem strange, given that the postbaptismal anointing has acquired the meaning of conferral of the royal priesthood.

6) Two complementary rites. The first is the clothing with the white garment (*OICA* 225), which is done by the godparents. An addition has been made to the old formula: *N. et N., nova creatura facti estis et Christum induistis.* The rite may be omitted, and the color of the garment may vary according to the region. The second rite is the presentation of the candle (*OICA* 226). The celebrant invites the godparents to light a candle from the Easter candle and give it to the neophyte. The celebrant then says a new prayer: *Lux in Christo facti estis. . . .* Children of light, the baptized must persevere in the faith and go out to meet the Lord when he comes.

[62] *OICA* 33.

b) Celebration of confirmation (*OICA* 227–231)

Normally, confirmation is given immediately and in connection with baptism. Therefore the priest will be delegated by the bishop to confer it, if the latter cannot be present. This serves to emphasize again the link between baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist that will follow.

c) Celebration of the Eucharist (*OICA* 232–234)

Unlike what we read in the *Traditio Apostolica,* there is no special rite for the communion of the newly baptized during the Eucharistic celebration. But there should be an attempt to highlight it in some way, thus emphasizing that it is the crowning of initiation.

d) The period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogia (*OICA* 235–239)

The *Ordo* has provided a period in which to assure the insertion of the neophytes into the community and to strengthen them in their first steps. Restoring the ancient tradition, the neophytes should have a special place among the faithful during the Easter season. They should be mentioned in the homily at the Eucharistic celebration and in the general intercessions. Toward the end of the Easter season, around Pentecost, a liturgical celebration should be held with external festivities according to local customs. If the bishop was unable to preside at the sacraments of initiation, he should try to meet at least once during the year with the newly baptized. It would be appropriate for him to celebrate the Eucharist, at which the neophytes may receive communion under both species.

e) Adaptations for special cases

1) An *Ordo simplicior initiationis adulti* (*OICA* 240–277) has been provided. The three scrutinies are omitted, but the *Ordo* provides for confirmation and the Eucharist. (2) Also provided is an *Ordo brevior in proximo periculo vel in articulo mortis adhibendus* (*OICA* 278–294), which includes confirmation and the Eucharist. (3) An *Ordo* has been provided to prepare adults who were baptized as infants but did not receive either confirmation or the Eucharist for these sacraments (*OICA* 295–303). (4) There is an *Ordo initiationis puerorum qui aetatem catecheticam adepti sunt* (*OICA* 306–369). The three stages of initiation for adults are kept, and the celebration continues with the three sacraments of initiation. Some of the formulas and rites of the *OICA* have been adapted. Finally we should mention, for its ecumenical importance,

the appendix that contains an *Ordo admissionis valide iam baptizatorum in plenam communionem Ecclesiae catholicae* (*OICA,* Appendix 1–31).

C. THE *ORDO BAPTISMI PARVULORUM (OBP)*

The ritual is not entitled "Christian Initiation of Children." This is correct, since in the Latin Church children receive only baptism but are not initiated, which would also require the reception of confirmation and the Eucharist. The Ritual of Paul V contained three consecutive exorcisms, remnants of the three Gelasian scrutinies. We can say that, for the first time, Vatican II has created a ritual for the baptism of children truly adapted to them. Although at present the Latin Church does not confer the three sacraments of initiation on children, and for this reason the rituals for confirmation and the Eucharist had to be separated, the renewed rite has been very careful to stress, whenever possible, the link between the three sacraments. Provision was made for baptism to take place within the Eucharistic celebration, or at least to be preceded by a liturgy of the Word.

1. *The General Introduction*

The importance of baptizing children is stressed. It is up to priests and catechists to explain the meaning of John 3:5, *Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto . . .,* and to explain that children are baptized in the faith of the Church and their parents. Nevertheless, the *Coetus* that prepared the ritual was influenced by the questions raised concerning the baptism of children, and it goes to extremes in reminding the parents of their responsibility—at least six times. The function of the local community is to pray for, care for, and educate these children. For this reason the ritual calls for the assent of the entire assembly to this baptism (*OBP* 4).

The preparation of the parents for the baptism of their children is stressed (*OBP* 5). No liturgical-catechetical framework is provided for this preparation. Nothing prevents surrounding it with celebrations of the Word, which could borrow from those of the *OICA* with modifications in the prayers. It may also be asked whether the presence of the child and the various exorcisms, together with the various presentations, might not have a major impact on the parents. Perhaps the rites of the *GeV* could be restored, or even those of *Ordo* XI, but this would presuppose intervention by the Congregation for Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Insistence on the parents' responsibility

in no way ignores the usefulness of the godparents (*OBP* 6). It is the duty of the parish priest to prepare the family and community. The bishop must be involved in this and should create a kind of catechetical organization; he should also be concerned about the way the ritual is carried out (*OBP* 7).

The time for the conferral of baptism varies. Ordinarily the parents should inform the parish priest shortly before the birth of their child. In this way it will be easier to arrange for children to be baptized in groups (*OBP* 8). Obviously, the Easter Vigil or Sundays are especially appropriate days for baptism, since on these days the meaning of baptism as burial and resurrection with Christ is more evident. The rite should also normally take place in the parish church amid the assembly of the faithful. It is the right of the parish priest to baptize, and the sacrament should not be celebrated in a private home or in a hospital except if there is danger of death (*OBP* 10–13). Since the *Ordo* has provided for a liturgy of the Word, the children should be taken to another place and entrusted to the care of other women (*OBP* 14).

2. *The Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum*

a) Reception of the children (*OBP* 32–43)

The main points are these: the priest reminds the parents of their responsibility; then he traces the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and invites the parents and godparents to do the same. The joy of the community as it welcomes the child is also expressed (*OBP* 37–43). The reception should ordinarily take place at the entrance of the church, which is festively decorated for the occasion. At the beginning of the celebration, the priest, deacon, and others move there in procession.

b) Celebration of the Word of God (*OBP* 44–52)

For this liturgy the children may be taken to a place where they will not disturb the celebration (*OBP* 42–43). This liturgy has the same structure as that used in the Eucharistic celebration. The *Ordo* offers a large number of readings (*OBP* 44, 186–194, 204–215). These readings should be studied and commented upon during the period of preparation for baptism. A short homily follows, which may be concluded by a period of silence and a suitable song by the congregation (*OBP* 45–46). Those to be baptized are remembered in the general intercessions (*OBP* 47).

c) Preparatory rites for baptism (*OBP* 48–52)

As they move toward the baptistery, a short version of the Litany of the Saints is sung, to which may be added the names of the patron saints of those to be baptized (*OBP* 48). The priest pronounces the exorcism, choosing one of the two new formulas adapted for children (*OBP* 49, 221). The content of these formulas is very positive. The Son has been sent to cast out the power of the spirit of evil and bring us into the kingdom of light; baptism will make these children temples of God's glory in whom the Spirit dwells. The second formula is more moralizing but perhaps more accessible. For the anointing with the oil of catechumens, the formula is the same as that used for adults. If, for serious reasons, the conference of bishops decides to omit the anointing, the priest says only the fomula (*OBP* 50–51). After a pause for silence, the priest lays his hand on each child in silence (*OBP* 52).

d) Celebration of baptism (*OBP* 53–68)

The rites and formulas are identical to those for the initiation of adults, although some of the admonitions have been changed.

1) Blessing of the water: outside Easter time, water is to be consecrated for each baptism (*OBP* 54).

2) The renunciation and profession of faith are preceded by an admonition reminding the parents again of their serious responsibility. They must remember that they have promised to raise their children to follow them in the practice of the faith (*OBP* 56–58). Baptism is preceded by an admonition in which the parents are invited to express their desire to have their child baptized in the faith of the Church that they have just professed.

3) Baptism may be performed by immersion (*OBP* 60). In this case, the parents and godparents lift the child from the baptismal font. If baptism is conferred by infusion, the mother and father (or the godparents) hold the child during the baptism.

4) The postbaptismal anointing and the clothing with the white garment take place as in the *OICA* (*OBP* 62–63).

5) The presentation of the candle is modified slightly from the ceremony for adults. The celebrant says only *Lumen Christi accipite.* The parents and godparents light the child's candle from the paschal candle. Then, once again, the celebrant reminds the parents of their

responsibilities: these children must persevere in the faith and go out to meet the Lord when he comes (*OBP* 64).

6) If the conference of bishops decides to keep the rite of *ephphetha,* it is performed as for adults. However, a new formula accompanies the rite (*OBP* 65).

7) Concluding rites (*OBP* 67–71). If the baptism did not take place in the sanctuary (which is better), the group goes in procession to the altar while a baptismal canticle is sung.[63] This rite is meant to stress the link between baptism and the Eucharist, which is the crowning of initiation–although too often only in theory. The Lord's Prayer is said by all after an admonition in which the celebrant recalls (in abstract fashion) the link between the three sacraments of initiation (*OBP* 68–69). The celebration concludes with a blessing of the mothers, who hold the children in their arms, then the fathers, and lastly all the faithful. There are various formulas for the blessing (*OBP* 70, 247–249). After the blessing, a song such as the *Magnificat* can be used to express the joy of all. The practice of bringing the child to the altar of the Blessed Virgin may be observed where it already exists (*OBP* 71).

e) Baptism during Mass (*OBP* 29).
If baptism is conferred on Sunday, normally the Mass for that Sunday is used. But during the week the readings may be chosen from those suggested by the *Ordo* (*OBP* 44, 186–194, 204–215). The order to be followed is logical. The reception of the children takes place at the beginning of Mass, and the greeting and penitential rite are omitted; the Creed is not said, since the profession of faith takes place during the baptismal rites.

f) Special rites of baptism
An *Ordo* is provided for catechists when no priest or deacon is available (*OBP* 132–156). In that case the anointings are omitted, and for

[63] According to the ritual, the baptism should be able to be seen by all the faithful. This is right. But it seems there have been, and still are, exaggerations. The water is blessed in the sanctuary in front of everyone, but the baptistery remains hidden instead of being located in a place of honor. After the baptism, there is no further sign of what has been accomplished. We need a new and better study of the proper place for the baptistery. It should be fixed, yet allow for participation. What must be avoided is the use of a vessel, which may be worthy but is not a baptistery, an important and fixed place in a parish church.

the postbaptismal anointing the catechist says only the formula (*OBP* 151). The final blessings provided by the regular *Ordo* are not given.

There is also a ritual for children *in articulo mortis* (*OBP* 157–164), in which only the essential points are kept. If the child survives, there is a reception in the church, a liturgy of the Word, the anointing with chrism, and the presentation of the white garment and the candle. The concluding rites are the same as those of the *Ordo* (*OBP* 165–185).

We might ask why neither the *OICA* nor the *OBP* did not encourage and provide liturgically for the celebration of the anniversary of baptism, for which the *GeV* gives us several formulas.[64]

D. A BRIEF EVALUATION OF THESE NEW *ORDINES*

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy decided to give guidelines on the method to be followed when it is judged necessary to modify an existing ritual. We do not need to list again the points enumerated by the Constitution on the Liturgy, which are well known.[65] Here we would like to begin with a reflection on the method followed by the rituals of Christian initiation after Vatican II.

We will examine briefly the criteria that guided the renewal of these rituals.

1. The criterion of necessity. The initiation of adults had been reduced to preserving the rites of the past. The scrutinies were performed consecutively in the same celebration, and the presentations had been suppressed. The formation of adults was exclusively catechetical. The growing number of adults seeking initiation calls for a major revision. As for the ritual of baptism for children, it was fossilized and lacked adaptation. Here again the exorcisms, which had been written with adults in mind, were performed consecutively in the same celebration.

2. Doctrinal criterion. The rituals of initiation had no doctrinal introduction, only rubrics and canonical prescriptions. It was of utmost importance to link the sacrament to its scriptural sources. Here the present rituals made a happy change by introducing a liturgy of the

[64] *GeV,* 504–509. B. Fischer has studied this celebration: "Formes de la commémoraison du baptême en Occident," *MD* 58 (1959) 11–134. *Mens concordet voci,* in honor of A.-G. Martimort, contains the following article by B. Fischer: "Formen der Tauferinnerung in der Geschichte des privaten christlichen Morgen- und Abendgebets" (Paris, 1983) 569–576.

[65] *SC* 23.

Word. In the *OICA,* the liturgy of the scrutinies introduces the catechumen to Scripture, which stimulates and sheds light on doctrinal reflections on the sacrament.

3. Criterion of intelligible texts. This presupposes translation into the various languages, with the difficult set of problems every translation involves. Sometimes a simple translation is not enough for complete understanding of the text, and the proposed theme will need to be expressed by means of a newly created text. We have seen that the rituals of initiation, the *OICA* in particular, while leaving an ancient prayer unchanged, offer an alternative prayer that is often more suited to today's culture.

4. Criterion of intelligible rites. The rites must obviously be intelligible if they are to correspond to the nature of a sacrament.[66] To achieve this clear intelligibility and bring out the essential elements, it was often necessary to discard unessential rites, which were created over time and might obscure what is central in the rite. This is the teaching of the Constitution on the Liturgy.[67] For this reason certain rites were either suppressed, such as the rite of salt, or modified, such as the *ephphetha.*

We can conclude by saying that the *OICA* and the *OBP* are models of adaptation and correspond well to the wishes of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

E. CONFIRMATION

The very complicated problem of confirmation cannot be treated here in all its magnitude. It is not for us to go into pastoral details. As far as theological questions are concerned, we will ask some questions and suggest a biblical-liturgical methodology for study of this sacrament.

1. *The Ritual of Confirmation after Vatican II*

The first typical edition was published August 22, 1971. It was preceded by an apostolic constitution explaining the scriptural origins of the sacrament and its historical development. It was an excellent study, with scientific references to liturgical and patristic sources. Pope Paul VI concluded the constitution by stating the essence of the sacrament: *Suprema Nostra Auctoritate Apostolica decernimus et construimus ut*

[66] *SC* 34, 59.
[67] *SC* 61–80.

ea quae sequuntur in Ecclesia latina in posterum serventur. Sacramentum confirmationis confertur per unctionem chrismatis in fronte, quae fit manus impositione atque per verba: "Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti."

The Introduction begins with a paragraph *De confirmationis dignitate,* which states that those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through confirmation (*OC* 1). This statement is true for adults but is still only theoretical for children. The gift of the Holy Spirit is emphasized by a special term: *Hac donatione* ("giving") *Spiritus Sancti,* which means that it is a special gift, although this act of giving must not be reified. The effect of the sacrament is clearly expressed: *Perfectius Christo conformantur* (the terminology used by St. Ambrose[68]) *et virtute roborantur,*[69] *ut testimonium Christi perhibeant ad aedificationem Corporis eius in fide et caritate.* The sacrament imprints a character, which means it cannot be repeated (*OC* 2). Next follows a discussion of the ministers of the sacrament. The bishop is the original minister, but he may delegate a priest under the conditions listed (*OC* 7).

Paragraph 3 of the Introduction deals with the celebration of the sacrament. A few observations seem necessary. Number 9 contains statements that require an explanation. Quoting the text of the apostolic constitution, it says: *The sacrament of confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."*

The anointing with chrism is mentioned first. This seems to contradict the excellent history of the sacrament set forth in the Constitution, which shows clearly that in both the Acts of the Apostles and in successive stages in the history of the sacrament the laying on of hands plays the main role. But, influenced by a theology of matter and form, the anointing (the matter) becomes increasingly important, so much so that in such a view there could be no laying on of the hand, since it is not visible matter. The laying on of the hand remains in the new rite,

[68] *De sacramentis,* SCh 25bis, III, 11, 8, 47.

[69] This Tridentine theology has a particular origin. A homily attributed to Faustus of Riez in the fifth century (PL 7:119–120; 130, 240–241), which has been studied by L. A. van Buchem, *L'homélie Pseudo-eusébienne de Pentecôte* (Nijmegen, 1967), states that the Holy Spirit is given for combat, like the arms given to a soldier for battle. This theology (?) prevailed, Rabanus Maurus of Fulda disseminated it, and it was accepted by the Council of Trent.

but it is done to the group as a whole, and the formula of anointing says that this is what confers the sacrament: *Confirmo te chrismate salutis.*

The expression *confertur per unctionem chrismatis in fronte, quae fit per manus impositionem* ("is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand") is ambiguous. It does *not* mean that the bishop must lay his hand on the candidate's head while anointing the forehead with chrism. No official clarification of this important expression has been given.

The expression *Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti* must be properly understood: Receive this sign which confers on you the gift of the Spirit. Obviously, what is conferred is not the *signaculum* per se but the Spirit by means of the *signaculum.*

The next paragraph of the Introduction, contrary to history and the original Latin tradition, seems to show a distinct preference for the anointing, the matter of the sacrament: *Impositio vero manuum, quae fit super confirmandos cum oratione "Deus omnipotens"* [Gelasian prayer that conferred the Spirit and was followed by the anointing with the formula *Signum Christi in vitam aeternam*], *etsi ad validam sacramenti collationem non pertinet. . . .* It is true that the ambiguous expression *Sacramentum confirmationis confertur per unctionem chrismatis in fronte, quae fit per manus impositionem* tries to save the laying on of the hand, although it confuses it with the anointing.

Paragraph 13 provides for something new: celebration of confirmation within Mass as the ordinary way of conferring the sacrament. A Mass for confirmation is given with a rich selection of readings. But a rite for confirmation outside Mass is also provided. Preceded by a liturgy of the Word, the rite includes the renunciation and the profession of faith and concludes with the Our Father (*OC* 34–49).

2. *Reflections and Questions*

a) The method to be followed for studying questions related to confirmation. In their studies, liturgical commissions almost always start from pastoral concerns or presuppositions. Such a method does not allow for truly objective research, since the commission wants to find the answer it is looking for. We see, unfortunately, that the apostolic constitution, although its method is in itself excellent, changes direction at a certain point and no longer follows its original course because it is anchored to a theology of matter and form.

Our method must be none other than a study of the scriptural, patristic, and liturgical sources. But we must remain aware of the method's objectivity, not making preconceived choices so as to arrive at the concrete pastoral problem.

In the case of studying the Scriptures, two problems arise: (1) We have already pointed out that we cannot read a book such as the Acts of the Apostles anecdotally. The fact is that the gift of the Spirit happens to be conferred before baptism. Sacred Scripture is not a course in systematic theology. It will not always be easy to determine the meaning of the laying on of the hand or hands. (2) We need to study the exact meaning of the different uses of the word "gift," which is used in Scripture and the patristic writings to indicate the work of the Spirit. It seems that the word "gift" refers at times to an effect of the Spirit's activity, as in the case of baptism, which transforms human beings into new creatures; the Eucharist, which transforms the bread into the body of Christ; penance, which forgives sins, etc. But for confirmation and the order of priesthood, could the word "gift" have another meaning and refer to the gift of the Spirit himself for building up the Church? In any case, we must try to see what God's saving plan for us has been and how this plan "uses" the various sacraments. Therefore we should try to study this sacrament, not by beginning with its effects but with how it fits into the overall saving plan of God. Perhaps in baptism the Spirit gives new life, but in confirmation the Holy Spirit himself is given for a mission of witness, which is realized sacramentally in worship, especially in the Eucharist, which proclaims Christ's death and resurrection. St. Thomas already compared confirmation to ordination and saw the two sacraments as ordered to worship.[70]

Patristic research must take into account the situation of the ecclesiastical writer, whether Eastern or Western. We must also remember that for the Fathers confirmation was conferred immediately after baptism and before the Eucharist. As such, it does not require long or detailed commentaries. In their language, the term "baptism" often includes both baptism and confirmation. It indicates a new life and new way of acting in building up the Body of Christ.

We should note that many studies have stopped at the aspect of witness and strength inherent in confirmation.

[70] *Summa theologiae,* III, q. 6, a. 6. See R. Bernier, "La confirmation chez saint Thomas," *LeV* 11 (1961) 64ff.

We have already mentioned several texts from the Fathers of the Church in our study of initiation during the first four centuries (pp. 12–25). We note here some famous texts, including that of Tertullian, which have become classic: *. . . caro abluitur, ut anima emaculetur; caro ungitur, ut anima consecretur; caro signatur, ut anima muniatur; caro manus impositione adumbratus, ut et anima spiritu inluminetur; caro corpore et sanguine Christ vescitur, ut anima de Deo signetur.*[71] This text is quoted in the apostolic constitution introducing the present rite of confirmation. Tertullian also wrote: *Non quod in aqua Spiritum Sanctum consequimur, sed in aqua emundati sub angelo Spiritu Sancto praeparemur.*[72] Tertullian does not mean that the Spirit is not present in baptism; he is using the angel at the pool of Probatica as a type. Tertullian reserves the special gift of the Spirit to confirmation.

The *Traditio Apostolica,* attributed to Hippolytus of Rome, gives a formula for confirmation that accompanies the laying on of the hand. We find it particularly significant: *Domine Deus, sicut fecisti illos dignos accipere remissionem peccatorum in saeculum venturum, fac eos dignos ut repleantur Spiritu Sancto, et mitte super eos gratiam tuam, ut tibi serviant secundum voluntatem tuam. . . .*[73] The text seems to say that while in baptism the Holy Spirit transforms us by preparing us sinless for the last day, in confirmation he fills us with his gifts for the service we must carry out in doing the Father's will. This seems to mean identification with Christ the priest, who on the cross fulfills the Father's will. In the context of the *Traditio Apostolica,* the word *servire* almost always refers to a cultic activity. After the kiss of peace given to the neophyte by the bishop at the end of the rite of confirmation, the *Traditio Apostolica* notes that "after all this" the newly baptized can pray with the faithful, but not before they have received baptism and confirmation.[74]

St. Ambrose of Milan sees confirmation as the *perfectio* of the baptized: *Post fontem remanet ut perfectio fiat.*[75] The text could be taken to mean that first, in baptism, we receive a new mode of being; then, in confirmation, we receive the ability to act in a new way according to the image of Christ. *Perfectio* would simply be conformity to Christ in the fullness of his priesthood.

[71] *De resurrectione,* 8, 3; CCL 2, 931.
[72] *De baptismo,* 61, 1; CCL 1, 282.
[73] *Traditio Apostolica,* 21, 52–53.
[74] Ibid., 54–55.
[75] *De sacramentis,* III, 2, 8–10; SCh 25bis, 96–98.

St. Augustine describes initiation in a poetic manner, pointing out the distinction between baptism and confirmation, as well as the perfection brought by the gift of the Spirit in confirmation: *Accessit baptismum et aqua, quasi conspersi estis ut ad formam panis venietis. Sed nondum est panis sine igne: Quid ergo significat ignis? Hoc est chrisma. Oleum etenim ignis nostri, Spiritus Sancti est sacramentum. . . . Accedit ergo Spiritus Sanctus, post aquam ignis, et efficemini panis quod est corpus Christi.*[76]

St. Leo the Great, in his sermon on the occasion of the anniversary of his episcopal consecration, explains that although he has received a special priestly consecration, the same anointing that was conferred on him in a special manner has also in some way been conferred on all the faithful.[77]

We must take into account the councils and the magisterium. We note that the documents are abundant without mentioning all of them. There is the letter *Cum venisset* of Innocent III.[78] We may wonder whether the obscure text in the apostolic constitution in the present ritual originated in this letter. Written in 1204, it is not so much concerned about exactly when the grace of the sacrament is conferred or to which rite it is linked; rather it is concerned that the *chrismatio* on the forehead be reserved to the bishop. We should note that, with regard to confirmation, Innocent III places the laying on of the hand and the anointing on the same sacramental level. He writes: *Per frontis chrismationem manus impositio designatur. . . .* We recognize the style of the apostolic constitution. But Innocent III, writing to the Orientals, explains that what the anointing is for them, the laying on of the hand is for us. Later we read that the Spirit is given *ad augmentum et robur.* The letter *Sub catholicae fidei* of Innocent IV[79] also insists on the anointing on the forehead which must be done only by the bishop.

The Second Council of Lyons (1274) demanded a profession of faith from Michael VIII Paleologos. With regard to confirmation, we read: *Aliud est sacramentum confirmationis quod per manuum impositionem episcopi conferunt, chrismando renatos*.[80] We can see the importance given

[76] *Sermo* 227, *In die Pascha,* PL 38:1100; SCh 116, 236.

[77] *Sermo* 4, *In anniversario consecrationis ipsius,* CCL 138, 16–17.

[78] PL 215:285. See L. Ligier, "La confirmation en Orient et en Occident du nouveau rituel romain," *Gregorianum* 53 (1972) 41–42.

[79] J. D. Mansi, *Littera*, 23, 579. See Ligier, "La confirmation," 42.

[80] DS 860.

to the anointing as the matter of the sacrament; however, the sign of the laying on of hands remains. Here the wording is the opposite of that used in the apostolic constitution: *Sacramentum confirmationis confertus per unctionem chrismatis in fronte quae fit per manus impositionem.*

The Council of Florence (1439) and its famous *Decree for the Armenians* follows the same line of matter and form, and the anointing becomes more important. In fact, the primary concern of Pope Eugenius IV is that the anointing on the forehead be reserved to the bishop.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) adds no new elements. With regard to the effects of confirmation, the council limits itself to the increase of grace and the strength to bear witness.

The bull *Ex quo primum* of Pope Benedict XIV reopens the debate between Rome and Byzantium on the manner of conferring confirmation. The bull does not intend to study the question of the laying on of hands or the anointing. Instead it allows the freedom to choose one rite or the other, stating that those who hold that the laying on of hands is the matter of confirmation cannot say that the Greeks do not have confirmation because they do not have this laying on of hands. Then it makes a practical decision: In the Roman rite the bishop lays his right hand on the head, while with his thumb he makes the sign of the cross on the forehead with chrism. This discipline was observed until Vatican II. In any case, the obscure expression that "the anointing . . . is done by the laying on of the hand" certainly does not refer to this rite imposed by Benedict XIV.

b) The introductions to the present rituals state that the postbaptismal anointing confers the priesthood of the faithful. Here we are faced with an inversion of the *lex orandi, lex credendi.* In fact, in order to justify the above statement, the ancient prayer that accompanies the postbaptismal anointing (which is found for the first time in the *De sacramentis* of St. Ambrose and is repeated in every ritual of the Roman liturgy) has been modified. The old Ambrosian formula read as follows: *Deus, omnipotens, Pater Domini nostri Iesu Christi, qui te regeneravit ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto, concessitque tibi peccata tua ipse te unget in vitam aeternam.*[81] The present text reads: *. . . Ipse te linit chrismate salutis, ut eius aggregatus populo Christi sacerdotis, prophetae et regis membrum permaneas in vitam aeternam.*

[81] *De sacramentis,* 11, 24; SCh 25bis, 88–89.

That the Church has the right to specify in this way the meaning of a sign cannot be denied. If the priesthood of the faithful is conferred by the postbaptismal anointing, the difficulty of giving the Eucharist before confirmation disappears, even though confirmation was seen, for example by St. Thomas Aquinas, as a deputation to worship along the lines of the discipline laid down by the *Traditio Apostolica.*

We should note that, at least apparently, none of this makes sense. After the rite of postbaptismal anointing, the rituals say that this anointing and its formula are omitted when confirmation is conferred immediately after baptism. If the postbaptismal anointing confers the royal priesthood, when is this priesthood received when the anointing is omitted? Perhaps in that case confirmation confers it. But in the admonition before confirmation, the bishop reminds those to be confirmed of their baptism and the priesthood they received at that time, without specifying when. Still, the question remains open.

c) Some, basing themselves on the so-called maturity needed to receive confirmation, think that confirmation should be conferred around the age of eighteen. Along with the same concern goes the observation that there is no longer an opportunity to catechize those who received confirmation and the Eucharist at an early age, either at the time of baptism or around the age of reason.

We will not go into the definition of maturity, but we would like to ask one question: Who is it that gives maturity in the first place? Is it not the Holy Spirit? The same Spirit whom we reject and then give as a reward for maturity attained in other ways is the source of Christian maturity. Another question: Can we abandon a very long tradition for pastoral reasons? It was hard enough to understand the inversion of the two sacraments because of infant mortality. Then confirmation was delayed in order to allow for better preparation. Now the reasons that cause some to consider delaying confirmation even longer are practical ones. We have seen that already in the late Middle Ages the pontificals contained a reminder not to forget to confer confirmation later. Now, in some countries, a confirmation certificate is not even required before marriage. Thus the sacrament of confirmation is becoming extinct. Since it is considered only in terms of witness and with no connection to worship and the other sacraments, it is not regarded as a sacrament absolutely necessary for salvation. And so the danger that confirmation will disappear is by no means hypothetical.

Nevertheless, we can understand the concern of a bishop who is afraid he will have no further contact with the baptized while they are children. Thus he tries, perhaps unrealistically, to remedy the situation by delaying confirmation. The true solution does not seem to lie in this practice. But neither should we regard the sacrament as a kind of magic that works in every case. A sacrament does not work mechanically. There must be a well prepared and executed catechesis to prepare for the sacrament. Perhaps this plan, which is both old and new, might yield more lasting results: leave confirmation in its place, that is, before the Eucharist, and provide for a profession of faith around the age of eighteen to twenty, available only to those who have followed a program of catechesis overseen by the episcopal conferences. Perhaps the true solution might be found in this triad: catechesis, sacrament, mystagogia. It is not enough to confer the sacrament, even with good preparation, and then leave those who have received it to themselves.

These are only reflections. They require further but necessary study if we are to remedy the situation of a Catholicism too often in danger of becoming more formal and distant from authentic Christianity.

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B. Reconciliation

Antonio Santantoni

4

Reconciliation in the First Four Centuries

Ancient penance, canonical penance, public penance, and solemn penance—these are all slightly different ways of referring to the same reality, the penitential discipline of the ancient Church, which took shape and was canonized between the second and sixth centuries. To give two points of reference, that was between the appearance of *The Shepherd* of Hermas in the second half of the second century and the celebration of the Third Council of Toledo in 589. The history of this discipline and of its rites is, by and large, located between these two dates.

I. PENANCE AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. *In the Gospel Message*

The announcement of a time of conversion for the forgiveness of sins is the heart of the gospel event. The call to μετάνοια ("repentance"—the word appears fifty-eight times in the New Testament), the indispensable condition for all forgiveness of sin, is made repeatedly in the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth (Mark 1:15; Matt 4:16-17; Luke 4:18-19; Matt 9:12-13 and parallels, 12:41-42; Luke 13:5; Mark 6:12). He does not claim the power to forgive sins only for himself (Mark 2:12 and parallels) but even passes it to his disciples (Matt 18:18; John 20:23). John the Baptist had made this same call to conversion as he preached and practiced a baptism of penance and of conversion by the Jordan River (Matt 3:2, 11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 8), where those who heard him let themselves be baptized while confessing their sins.

2. *The Forgiveness of Sins in the Church of the Apostles*

We find the same urgency in the apostolic Church (Acts 2:38-40; 3:26; 5:31 and passim). However, while there is evidence of the theme still

appearing, corresponding evidence of canonical discipline or pastoral practice is not to be found.

Nothing allows us to consider as probable a practice of canonical penance in the apostolic age or immediately thereafter. "Excommunication" was foreseen only in the most serious cases. The guilty party would have been called repeatedly to respect the law of God and the discipline of the Church (Matt 18:15-17; Titus 3:10). In a situation where conversion took place, all would have ended there; otherwise those responsible in the Church would have imposed the penalty of excommunication.

Excommunication, the final and extreme sanction, was understood to be a medicinal punishment, not a vindictive one. Its intention was to reawaken the grace of repentance and conversion in the heart of the brother or sister. When this happened, the brother or sister, regardless of what his or her sin might have been, would have been reintegrated into the community. No sin is so grave that it cannot be forgiven (Jas 1:21; Rev 2:20-22; 1 Tim 1:19-20; 1 Cor 5:4-5; 2 Cor 5:5-11; 12:21). The sinner, seeing that he or she had been alienated from the community, would better understand the seriousness of the sin. Excommunication would give the sinner's body over to Satan so that the sinner's spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord (1 Cor 5:3-5). There is no reason to think that this process might not have been repeated.[1]

We do not know if a rite for the readmission or reconciliation of the excommunicated existed in the apostolic Church, as there would by the middle of the second century, even though it is possible that such a public event would have been thought to render the punishment more effective.

[1] A separate and delicate problem is represented by the famous text of 1 John 5:16, in which the sacred author orders that one not pray for someone guilty of a "sin that leads to death." Scholars are largely in agreement that this refers to the "sin against the Holy Spirit," to an attitude of being closed off to grace, or of apostasy. Even more drastic are the texts of Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-29, and 12:17, in which the possibility of twice claiming the merits of the sacrifice of Christ is denied. This is not the place to resolve what is a difficult exegetical and dogmatic problem. Here it will suffice to underline two things: (1) The intransigence of these texts and the attitude of which they speak do not prevent the same sacred authors from writing their luminous pages on mercy and divine forgiveness, beginning with 1 John 2:12; (2) The texts in question, if they were at the root of an intransigent attitude in the first centuries of the Church, did not stop the more pastoral attitude of the same time from eventually prevailing over this rigorist tendency.

For all other sins, which were not subject to excommunication, nothing leads us to think that rites of sacramental reconciliation existed. The New Testament indicates several methods for the expiation of personal sins: conversion itself (abandoning the way of evil, Jas 1:19); the use of mercy to obtain mercy (Jas 2:13; Luke 6:3ff.; 1 John 4:18; Matt 6:12, 14-15; 18:35); personal prayer (Jas 5:15) and the prayer of one's neighbor (Jas 5:16); the conversion of a sinner (Jas 5:20); confession of sins or the profession of one's self as a sinner (1 John 1:9; Jas 5:15); and the examination of conscience (1 Cor 11:28, 31-32).

Scholars today are in agreement in denying that these texts describe confession as it was later defined by the Council of Trent. One ought rather to think of a person's self-proclamation as a sinner before God and the community—exactly the opposite of the attitude of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11, 13-14, and an attitude exactly in conformity to the truth demanded by 1 John 1:10. It is the attitude of Peter before the Lord (Luke 5:8) and of the son who returns to his father's house (Luke 15:18-19, 21).[2]

The expiation of the sin was a function of the sorrow that accompanied repentance. Self- examination, the confession of sins, acceptance of the penalty of excommunication—all this makes sense insofar as it helps to expiate sin. The one who will not practice self-chastisement will be chastised by God (cf. 1 Cor 11:31-32), while "godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Cor 7:8-13).

If there did not yet exist a ritual, there did already exist the presuppositions on which future developments would build.

II. PENANCE IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH

A decisive turning point was the appearance of *The Shepherd,* the appearance of which scholars locate between the end of the first century and the middle of the second. Hermas, its author, recounts the visions he has received, announcing the imminent parousia of Christ. It is the

[2] This use, which can boast of a long tradition in the history and in the spiritual and ascetical traditions of ancient Judaism (Prov 28:13; 2 Sam 12:13; Neh 9:2-3; Lev 26:40, etc.), as well as in the world contemporary with Jesus (Matt 3:5-6; Luke 15:21; 18:13; Jas 5:16, etc.) is already attested in the *Didache* (14, 1). The same work requires a real confession of sins before the assembly itself: "In the assembly, you will make a complete confession of your sins and will not go to prayer with an impure conscience" (*Didache,* 4, 14; SCh 248 [Paris, 1978] 165. See also the *Letter of Barnabas,* 19, 12; SCh 172 [Paris, 1971] 211). This use was also established in certain ascetical quarters that were especially fervent.

urgency associated with this time that moves him to announce a "second repentance," which will be permitted "only once"[3] for those who, although baptized, have fallen again into error.

This additional mercy, which Hermas intended to be strictly limited, became almost immediately a rule and, as a result, an accepted practice. Tertullian, at the end of the second century, was able to give us a precise account of penitential discipline that was rigid, very severe, and strictly limited to a single instance in the life of a Christian. This was the ancient canonical penance, also known as solemn or public penance (ἐξομολόγησις).[4] An outline of the salient characteristics, not following a precise chronological scheme, follows.

1. *Canonical Penance*

Canonical penance was a real *status* in the ancient Church, that is to say, it was a well-defined condition, or state, of life within the Church. Those who embraced it became partakers of the *ordo paenitentium* ("order of penitents"), which was subdivided into four categories according to the path of penance that had already been covered.[5]

The penitent remained kneeling even on Sunday, was excluded from the offertory and communion, was clothed in goatskin (a hairshirt made of goatskin, because the goat was the symbol of the damned, who were placed at the left hand of Christ the judge), or, in Spain, had long and unkempt hair and beards. Their faces looked neglected and emaciated because of fasting and because of the prohibition of taking care of one's own person. Bathing was prohibited. The sinner had to wait at the entrance of the church, prostrate on the ground, for the martyrs, confessors, and even the simple faithful to pass by and

[3] Hermas, *The Shepherd,* Mandates, IV, 3, 6. See also IV, 1, 8. Here the context is the pardon of an unfaithful spouse. More difficult to interpret is the selection of the Second Vision, 2, 5, which seems to be much more restrictive than those preceding: SCh 53bis (Paris, 1968) 153–155, 89.

[4] Tertullian, *Penance,* 9; SCh 316 (Paris, 1984) 181–183.

[5] The four categories are: the *flentes,* the *audientes,* the *substracti,* and the *consistentes.* The first remained outside of or in the back of the church, wearing sackcloth, in order to ask prayers from those who were entering. The second had access to hearing of the word of God and were dismissed with the catechumens at the beginning of the liturgy of the Eucharist. The *substracti* were able to participate in the entire liturgy but were always "prostrate" or kneeling, even on Sunday. The last, finally, participated in the Eucharistic liturgy in an upright position but without partaking of the offertory or communion.

had to throw himself at their feet, crying and asking prayers for himself and his sins.

In the daily life of the penitent, everything was mortification and renunciation. There were strict fasts repeated numerous times during the week, a pallet strewn with ashes for a bed, prolonged vigils, hundreds of genuflections and prostrations repeated morning and night, abstinence from meat, and the obligation to give alms. The community gave the penitents the most burdensome and difficult tasks: the carrying of the dead for funerals, the burial of bodies, etc.

The Christian who undertook penance was well aware that life would be radically changed. The penitent would no longer be able, either before or after reconciliation, to undertake military service, have recourse to the civil courts, undertake commercial activity, or exercise civil functions. Someone who had been a penitent could not accede to orders or ecclesiastical dignity, because the state of penance was an *infamia* ("disgrace") that inhered to the person. Total continence and the renunciation of the marital act was absolute and perpetual and lasted, for a person already married, until death. A man and a woman, entering into penitence as a married couple, chose a sort of "white widowhood" for their whole lives. The widow could not remarry. The unmarried person, even where allowed to marry (permission to marry was not given everywhere; for example, it seems to have been prohibited in Gaul), could not do so without incurring sin, however slight.

In practice, entrance into penitence resembled a sort of civil death, almost a religious profession. And in fact this latter was considered to be the most perfect form of real penitence, because it was total and perpetual, and those who entered religious life (even in the private form, the so-called "conversion") were dispensed from all penitential discipline, even if guilty of capital offenses. Religious profession and conversion were the only two[6] alternatives to the rigor of canonical penance.

2. *The Capital Triad*

The list of sins that required public penance varied from author to author and from time to time. They range from the minimum of the

[6] See A. Santantoni, *La Penitenza: Una pagina di storia antica, utile per i nostri tempi* (Turin, 1983) 67–68. See also C. Vogel, *Il peccatore e la penitenza nella Chiesa antica* 1 (Turin, 1970).

capital triad (apostasy, murder, and adultery) proposed by Pacian[7] (who died at the end of the fourth century) to the much longer and more detailed list of Caesarius of Arles († 542).[8]

3. *The Penitential Ritual*

The first document that offers us a reasonably coherent and organic ritual for penitents, from their admission into penitence up to the rite proper to reconciliation itself, is a Roman sacramentary, the Old Gelasian *(Vat. Reg.* 316*),* which was widely used outside Italy. It was published around 750; however, its older parts may be placed in the sixth century. A complex text, with various strata of diverse origins, especially Frankish or Gallican, it allows us to recover with reasonable certainty the principal thread of the penitential ritual on the eve of the great Carolingian reform.[9] Here we will follow this schema.

4. *The Entrance into Penitence*

It is not at all certain how the entrance into penitence would have taken place, whether the initiative for the confession of serious sin would have been left to a spontaneous free-will decision of the sinner or might rather have been the result of an order by the bishop. There would certainly not have been a total lack of those desirous of purification and penance in order to make a full reconciliation with the Church, even if it is possible to think that such individuals were not numerous. Already Tertullian laments the scarcity and laziness of those submitting to the discipline.[10] At any rate, evidence might be found of both cases,[11] and the bishop would certainly have taken the initiative when faced with a public or somehow notorious sin. This was the case with the famous episode of Bishop Ambrose and

[7] Pacian, *Parenesi,* 4: PL 13:1082–1090. "This restriction is contrary to the custom of the entire ancient Church" (C. Vogel, *Il peccatore e la penitenza nella Chiesa antica,* 1:81).

[8] Caesarius of Arles, *Sermon* 60; SCh 330 (Paris, 1971) 56–69.

[9] For our purposes here, it will suffice to mention once again the article by A. Nocent, "Il sacramento della penitenza e della riconciliazione," *Anàmnesis* 3/1:169–174.

[10] According to Tertullian, "I am right in believing that most avoid or postpone from day to day this act of penance" (*Penance,* 10; SCh 316 [Paris, 1984] 183–184).

[11] "Some sinners have spontaneously placed themselves among the penitents; others, excommunicated by us, were forced to do so" (Augustine, *Sermon* 232, *Opere di Sant'Agostino* 32/2 [Rome, 1984] 560–571).

Emperor Theodosius after the bloody incidents at Thessalonica in 390.

At least in Rome, it seems as though the rite was celebrated on the first day of Lent, our Ash Wednesday.[12] The rite probably began with the laying on of hands, accompanied by appropriate prayers and exhortations to penance. The Old Gelasian (8th cent.) foresees the imposition of the *cilicium,* or hairshirt,[13] which had already been prescribed as a universal custom throughout the Church of Gaul by the Council of Agde (can. 516) in 506. Later, in the ninth and tenth centuries,[14] the imposition of ashes would replace the laying on of hands. The Romano-Germanic Pontifical, from the tenth century, describes the rite with an abundance of details: an exhortation to the faithful for conversion and preparation for Easter in contrition and penance, the profession of faith, private confession to the presbyter, the recitation of the seven penitential psalms, the Our Father and other prayers (from the Gelasian), the imposition of ashes, the hairshirt, and finally the expulsion from the church.

5. *The Minister*

There is no doubt that initially the sole minister for penance was the bishop: "Only the bishop," says C. Vogel, "reconciles sinners. All the texts agree on this point."[15] But in the eighth century the Old Gelasian officially accepts the ministry of the presbyter.[16] This sanction of the presbyter's ministry, which had always been more or less accepted in cases of necessity, had already been accepted practice for centuries in the Celtic, Frankish, and Spanish Christian regions beyond the Alps.

6. *Duration*

The length of penitence varied greatly from region to region and from time to time. If for the *Didascalia* the norm was several weeks,[17] in

[12] *GeV* 1, 38, 355.

[13] *GeV* 1, 16, 83. The imposition of the hairshirt follows the expulsion from the church and had already been noted by Caesarius of Arles († 542) in his *Sermon* 67, SCh 330, pp. 124–135.

[14] After the Carolingian reform public penance was once again imposed for all serious and notorious sins.

[15] C. Vogel, *Il peccatore e la penitenza nella Chiesa antica,* 1:34.

[16] *GeV* 1, 38, 355.

[17] *Didascalia of the Twelve Apostles,* 2, 28, 6; F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et Consititutiones Apostolorum* (Paderborn, 1905) 1:1–384.

other areas the more common length was several years, and in extreme cases it could last for an entire lifetime. Persons in danger of death who had asked for penance, even if they had been granted Viaticum lest they die without the consolation of hope,[18] were, on their recovery, to embrace the penitential state and live like the penitents.[19] This did not always happen.[20]

7. Lent for the Penitents

For the penitents, Lent was a period of rigorous mortification in one's private and domestic life. From the point of view of the liturgy, prayers were said and hands were laid on repeatedly in the course of the celebration of Lent.[21] The community, which always prayed for its penitents in its universal prayer, intensified its prayers for them during Lent. The Old Gelasian contains remnants of these prayers with which the Church begs God for the pardon of the penitents and for all the faithful, who, joined together in the Lenten fast, are united in recognizing their sinfulness and their need for grace and forgiveness.[22]

8. *The Reconciliation of the Penitent*

The West recognized only one occasion for the reconciliation of the penitent: Holy Thursday in Rome and Milan, and Good Friday in Spain (at the ninth hour, the time of Jesus' death). The Spanish celebration was much more emotional, with dramatic litanies with all the people participating and calling for *indulgentiam* ("indulgence").[23] The Roman version was more subdued. According to the Old Gelasian, the deacon presented the penitents to the bishop, and their sorrow and contrition were made known along with the desire of the entire community to see them reconciled.

This text is noteworthy. The brief rubrics convey a very lively dramatic sense: the penitent enters the church after the assembly has already gathered. He leaves "the place where he has spent his penance

[18] Council of Nicea (325), can. 12: Mansi, 2:690.

[19] Council of Orange (441), can. 3: Mansi, 6:436–437.

[20] C. Vogel, *Il peccatore e la penitenza nella Chiesa antica,* 1:41: Leo I, *Letter to Rusticus, Bishop of Narbonne,* c. 9.

[21] One might turn to the study of A. Nocent, "Il sacramento della penitenza e della riconciliazione," *Anàmnesis* 3/1:159–175.

[22] See *GeV* 1, 39, 369–374; I, 19, 134–139. More than any single instance, it is the entire climate which is strongly penitential.

[23] See P. M. Gy, "Penance and Reconciliation," in *CP* 3:107.

et in gremio praesentatur aeclesiae [and is presented in the middle of the church] with his entire body prostrate on the floor."[24]

In this way the ecclesial community grew, whether by addition of those newly baptized (baptisms were celebrated during the Easter Vigil) or by the reconciliation of penitents. Both took place by means of the mystery of water that purifies, whether the water was that of the baptismal font or the water of tears that arose from a contrite heart.[25] The bishop (or the presbyter)[26] would at that point offer the *sacramentum reconciliationis* (the sacrament of reconciliation).[27]

9. *The Decline of Public Penance*

This rigid penitential discipline was not destined to last and declined for a number of reasons, not the least of which was changes in the political and social conditions of Christianity, the new imperial order that favored mass conversions of whole groups of pagans, which, in turn, led to a general relaxation of customs and a lessening of ascetic fervor.

It is entirely probable, moreover, that our imagination is too conditioned by official texts and by the severe exhortations and admonitions of councils, and especially of pastors and theologians. The very insistence and increasing severity of warnings and canons tell us much about the reality of things. Taking into account the sermons of the bishops and the writings of the authors of the time, one might well conclude that things were less dire than the canons would seem to indicate. Christians had quickly learned, it seems, not to think about the rigors and prohibitions of discipline. There were not only many who underwent the discipline of penance but also many who interrupted it, returning to normal life.[28] There were others who, although professing penance, dressed luxuriously, ate rich foods, took part in business, and carried on prestigious careers. This was especially true among the religious who, having chosen the religious life in order to avoid the shame of penance, made of their new position a jumping off point for the conquest of fresh honors and distinctions.[29]

[24] *GeV* 1, 38, 352.

[25] Ibid., 352–353.

[26] Ibid., 355.

[27] Ibid., 363.

[28] Council of Vannes (465), can. 3: Mansi 7:953; Council of Tours (461), can. 8: Mansi 7: 946; Council of Orléans (511), can. 11: Mansi 8:353; and others.

[29] Salvianus of Marseilles († ca. 480), *De gubernatione Dei,* 5, 10; CSEL 8:118–119.

Nonetheless, it must have been unusual for sinners, once reconciled, to return to serious sin ("who return, like dogs and pigs, to their first vomit"[30]). For them, condemnation would have been without appeal on the sacramental level. They would have been entirely without hope of once again obtaining penance and reconciliation. This is not to say that they would have been abandoned to Satan for all eternity. They would have been able to partake of the prayers of the faithful, even to go to Mass, but without receiving communion. At the moment of death they would have been able to receive Viaticum and so obtain the grace of communion.[31]

10. *The Pardon of "Ordinary" or "Daily" Sins*

Solemn penance was rigorous and special in the first centuries of the Church. This is not to say that Christians did not commit sins otherwise. One's own conscience would have been acute and aware of one's sins, and there was also an insistence on reparation and conversion. How then might a desire for penance, without a sacramental expression, have been met? An answer is given by Caesarius of Arles: "We do not say that persons who are still young and joined in matrimony ought to change their clothes. Rather they should change their way of life."[32]

What were the penitential acts that could substitute for canonical penance? They are listed in a well-known passage of the *Conferences* of one of the most famous spiritual masters of antiquity, John Cassian. Besides baptism and martyrdom, Cassian lists "the charity that covers a multitude of sins"; "profuse shedding of tears" and true sorrow for the sins that had been committed; "confession of one's guilt" (not to be understood as a confession in the Tridentine sense, but rather as a recognition of one's sinfulness before God and one's brothers and sisters); mortification of the heart and body; conversion of heart and amendment of life (here 1 John 5:16 and Jas 5:14-15 are cited); forgiveness for offenses received; striving for the conversion of one's brothers and sisters; and a life of charity and faith.[33] Saint Augustine limits

[30] Pope Siricius, *Letter to Imerius of Tarragona,* 5; PL 56:556–557.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Caesarius of Arles, *Sermon* 56; SCh 330 (Paris, 1971) 10–17.

[33] John Cassian, *Conferences,* 20: SCh 64 (Paris, 1955–1959) 56–72. This is in agreement with Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus,* 2, 4: SCh 286 (Paris, 1981) 106–113. Many of the Fathers seem not to have been too far from this position, but in their

himself to a reminder of the phrase "forgive us our sins"[34] as the principal means.

One must stress that the idea of daily sin among the Fathers is not absolutely identical with our concept of venial sin. Sins that we would today consider serious might well have fallen into this category. This makes the formulation of Cassian even more important.

11. *Penance and Eucharistic Communion*

Given that penitents as well as those guilty of serious sin but who were not undergoing public penance were excluded from communion (Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Gennadius, Caesarius), who would have been able to receive communion at least three times as prescribed by the Council of Agde (506)?[35] C. Vogel holds that, in practice, penitents who were seriously sorry for their sins and committed to works of penance would have been admitted, or at least tolerated, at communion.[36]

The difficulty, very real and serious, of reconciling moral rigor and the desire not to deprive the faithful of the means necessary for eternal salvation will be another of the motives, and not the last, that would move the Church to explore new and hitherto unexplored routes.

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sermons they seem to agree that such penitential practices are appropriate only for light sins, while for more serious sins only public penance might effect reconciliation with God (we note especially Augustine and Caesarius).

[34] Augustine, *Sermon* 352, *Opere di Sant'Agostino* 39:198–223.

[35] Council of Agde (506), can. 18: Mansi 8:327.

[36] C. Vogel, *Il peccatore e la penitenza nella Chiesa antica,* 1:46: The author says that it is extremely possible, and maybe he was being prudent. J. Ramos-Regidor agrees with him (*Il sacramento della penitenza* [Turin, 1974] 169–170): "But perhaps it conforms more to the situation and the mentality of the ancient Church to say that the ancient Christians, as the writings of the Fathers and the liturgical documents indicate, were conscious that participation in Eucharistic communion required an appropriate preparation but that at the same time the very participation itself had a penitential and purificatory value for those sinners who were truly penitent."

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Nicola Bux

5

Reconciliation in the Eastern Churches

I. PENITENTIAL PRACTICES AMONG THE RITES AND TRADITIONS OF EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

1. *In the Byzantine Tradition*

During the first five centuries of the Christian era, Syriac and Byzantine Christianity would have come to possess the apostolic canons and constitutions, as well as the canons of the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople, and of the Synods of Neocaesarea, Gangre, Laodicea, and Antioch concerning canonical penance (ἐξομολόγησις). St. Basil was one of the great regulators of this latter.[1] Later the discipline of penance would become quite varied, eventually declining and even falling prey to abuses among the Jacobites and Nestorians.

The euchology provides for a detailed accusation of sins and the imposition of a suitable penance by means of a variety of formulas. Sometimes, according to the ancient penitential canons, this latter was imposed after absolution. After having given an admonition that only God was able to forgive sins that had been confessed to another person, the confessor, having heard the accusation, said to the penitent: "Trusting in the word of the Savior: 'Those whose sins you remit . . .' I dare to say: For all those things which you have confessed to my poor, small self, and for all those things which you have not been able to say, whether because you were unaware of them or forgot them, God forgives you in this world and in the next."[2]

[1] See Nicola Bux, "Confessione, penitenza e communione nelle epistole canoniche di S. Basilio," *Communio* 71 (1983) 98–130.

[2] Εὐχολόγιον το μέγα (Rome, 1873) 203.

There follow two prayers addressed to God. In the first, the priest, without making any mention of his ministerial power, recalls the forgiveness of Christ to Peter, to the sinful woman and the publican, and asks the same for the penitent. In the second, he recalls, once again, the forgiveness to David, to Peter, to the sinful woman, to the publican, and to the prodigal son. He then adds: "May God forgive you in just the same way through me, in this world and in the next. May you be saved from his inflexible judgment. Do not be disturbed on account of the failures which you have confessed. Go in peace."[3] The order of these prayers is reversed in some of the euchologies.[4] The first formula is omitted in the Penitential of John the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople.[5]

Beside these ancient formulas and traditions for the administration of the sacrament of penance in the Byzantine Church, there are three others, one of which, like the second prayer mentioned above, makes mention of the minister.[6] The other two are, however, purely deprecative, that is, formulas which beg the Lord to give pardon, but which make no express mention of the ministerial action of the priest.[7] These cannot be considered formulas of absolution, because, in the manuscripts as well as in the euchologies, they are placed before the absolution. They may be considered, rather, prayers that are intended to aid in the preparation for the confession.

Goar records three formulas also used among the Greek Catholics of Sicily, Calabria, and Puglia, probably Roman in origin, of which the second and part of the third reflect the Latin influence of the indicative absolution, which is to say that the prayer declares, on God's behalf, the remission of sin.[8]

The formulas show that the absolution is a sacramental rite for the forgiveness of sins and that they are incomprehensible apart from faith on the part of the one who says the absolution and the one who

[3] Ibid., 207.

[4] J. Goar, Εὐχολόγιον *sive Rituale Graecorum* (Venice, 1730; reprint Graz, 1950) 544; E. Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus,* 1st ed., 3 vols. (Rouen, 1700–1702); 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Antwerp, 1736–1738; reprint Hildesheim 1967–1969) 2:102.

[5] See the Penitential of John the Faster: "In Joannis Jejunatoris Patriarchae Constantinopolitani sermonem de confessione et poenitentia," in J. Morin, *Commentarius historicus de disciplina in administratione sacramenti poenitentiae* (Antwerp, 1682; reprint Westmead, England, 1970).

[6] Goar, Εὐχολόγιον, 538.

[7] Ibid., 536.

[8] Ibid., 540.

receives it. The Penitential of John the Faster, the discourses attributed to him, and all subsequent documents are united in this. An exception is Cyril Lukaris, who was repeatedly condemned in the seventeenth century. Peter Moghila, patriarch of Kiev, declared: "This sacrament obtains its effects insofar as the absolution of sins is given by the priest in accord with the constitutions and customs of the Church. As soon as the sinner receives this pardon, all their sins are forgiven by God through the ministry of the priest, according to the saying of Jesus Christ himself: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. . . .'"[9]

The Synod of Jerusalem would even declare in 1672 that it confirmed the orthodox faith with the "Confession" of Patriarch Dositheus. Together with that of Moghila, these constitute the most authoritative acts of the Byzantine credo.[10]

2. *In the Syriac Tradition*

The sacrament of penance and all of its phases are designated by the terms *hûsoìo* or *hûsaiâ,* which means "forgiveness," "remission,"and also *hûsoìo dehtote,* which means "forgiveness of sins." These terms also refer to the prayers for the admission of penitents.

In the tradition of Syriac Christianity, Christians guilty of serious sins may not approach the sacred mysteries if they are not purified and reconciled with God by means of penance and the absolution of sins given by the priest in virtue of power received from Christ. Syriac Christians do not particularly distinguish between the formulas of absolution and the prayers that accompany them. The Nestorian bishop Ebed-Jesus († 1318), in the first chapter of the fourth treatise of his work *The Pearl,* spells out the doctrine. Although there is no indication of the formula of absolution, he does require the confession of sins. The Nestorians later rejected this.

Dionysus Bar-Salibi, the Jacobite bishop of Amida in the twelfth century, composed some canons for the reception of penitents in the sacrament of confession. The result is a penitential ritual that is a mitigated version of the discipline of the Syriac monophysite Church.[11]

[9] E. Kimmel, *Monumenta fidei Ecclesiae Orientalis* (Jena, 1850) 1:190.

[10] For the Russians, see V. Matlzew, *Die Sakramente der Orthodox-Kathol-Kirche* (Berlin, 1989) 219.

[11] J. L. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana,* vol. 1–2 (Rome, 1719) 175–176; H. Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium Coptorum, Syrorum et Armenorum in administrandis sacramentis* (Würzburg, 1864–1865; reprint Graz, 1961) 1:443–447.

After some remarks about the attitude of respect that the bishop, archimandrite, or priest ought to have toward the penitent, he prescribes that the confession be heard while seated at the door of the church. The penitent should present himself with head uncovered, hands joined, eyes downcast, and kneel at the priest's right for the confession. After having heard the confession, the priest says: "Keep yourself from repeating these deeds. I pardon you here as does God in heaven, and the deed that you have revealed will not be made manifest again on the day of Judgment, nor will you be condemned on its account."

Then the priest recites psalms and the *Gloria,* a number of ancient prayers, readings, and hymns, adding to them prayers relative to each sin, and lays on hands. When the confession has to do with sins of the flesh or lies, there is found at this point a reminder of the promise of Christ to the apostles: "What you bind on earth . . ."[12] Finally he imposes the canonical penance. After the penitent has completed the penance that had been imposed, he must once again present himself to the confessor. The confessor places his hands on the penitent's head, breathes three times into his face, and says: "May this sin be wiped away from your soul and body, in the name of the Father. May you be purified and made holy in the name of the Son. May you be pardoned and reconciled in the name of the Holy Spirit."[13] This is a deprecative formula. In this way the penitent is admitted to the holy mysteries.

One might argue that this is an instance of the ancient double reconciliation: the first, which admits one to communion; the second, which is more perfect and admits one also to the offertory.

3. *In the Assyrian-Nestorian Tradition*

Patriarch Hyoshiab of Adjabene (650–660) composed a rite of penance that, in its main phases, substantially reproduces the ancient rituals.[14]

There is also a commentary by Patriarch Timothy.[15] He asserts that the absolution contains three consignations, or signs of the cross,

[12] Denzinger, *Ritus,* 1:453.

[13] Assemani, *Bibliotheca*, 174.

[14] It is reproduced in its entirety in G. B. Badyer, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals* (London, 1852) 2, chap. 29; Denzinger, *Ritus,* 1:467, 471. An abbreviated version may be found in E. Renaudot, *Liturgiarum orientalium collectio,* 2 vols. (Westmead, 1970).

[15] Assemani, *Bibliotheca,* 3:287.

made on the penitent, and that after the third one the hands of the priest are placed on the head of the penitent. Deprecative formulas are used. For some categories of sin (apostasy, etc.) there is also an anointing with holy oil on the forehead, with, in this instance, a declarative formula.

Syrian Catholics and Chaldeans, like the Malabarese, are inspired, in these matters, by the Roman ritual, in accord with the Synod of Djampur. The *Ordo Chaldaicus* was printed in Rome in 1845. The Maronites approved an indicative formula at the Synod of Lebanon in 1736.[16]

4. *In the Armenian Tradition*

The office for the absolution of a penitent was reordered by Patriarch Maschdotz in the ninth century and is contained in the ritual that bears his name.[17] The penitent, kneeling at the side of the confessor, who places his hands on him, first makes a general confession with the aid of the priest. "He then confesses each sin. . . . After he has accepted the penance imposed by the priest, he asks the priest: 'Holy Father, you are the mediator of my reconciliation and my intercessor with God's only Son. I ask you therefore to absolve me of my sins by the power which has been given to you.'"

The priest then says a prayer in which he recalls that, by the power and express command of the Lord: "All which you will bind on earth . . . I absolve you [some rituals say, 'I have absolved you . . .'] of all of the bonds of sin, thoughts, words, and deeds, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and I admit you once again to the sacrament of the Holy Church. May all the good which you have done increase your merit and future glory. Amen."

Like the Syrian Jacobites, the Armenians have a special prayer for each sin. The formula of absolution is declarative. It is the same with Armenian Catholics, who have some variations, which are, however, not important.

According to Gregory of Dathévatzi, in his treatise on the sacrament of penance, St. Vartan quoted this formula in the seventh chapter of his book on *Admonitions* in the twelfth century. The witness of Vartan is important because he attempted to suppress the sacrament of

[16] Denzinger, *Ritus*, 1:443–444.

[17] Ibid., 472–474, with a Latin translation made by Richter based on the Constantinople edition of 1807.

penance, which he felt was no different from extreme unction. Because of this, the formula of Maschdotz is not used by all Armenians. Some say, "God forgives your sins."[18]

5. *In the Coptic Tradition*

Copts consider themselves to be obligated to auricular confession and to the enumeration of their sins according to species and number, despite the absence of any penitential ritual in their liturgical books. At the end of confession the priest recites a prayer in which he asks God for forgiveness and remission of sins. This is also said in a general fashion at the beginning of the Mass, by the priest preparing himself for the celebration and by the people preparing themselves for communion. In the context of individual confession, this prayer is said with some changes that refer to the penitent. This prayer, addressed to the Son, reminds one of the Latin *Confiteor.*

The confessor adds a second prayer, also called a blessing, which calls to mind the one in the ancient Latin penitential rite that the priest made after the absolution. Before departure, the penitent says, "I have sinned, my father, give me absolution." The confessor says, "You have been absolved of all of your sins." This prayer, which does not have a title in the rubrics, is called a blessing because it begins with the words "I bless you," and the priest, after saying it, blesses the people. When it is recited for an individual penitent, the formula is shortened.[19]

The following texts have been taken from manuscripts used by Orthodox Copts, with the exception of the parts of the blessing where Dioscorus and Severus are mentioned and where the Chalcedonian term "consubstantial" has been suppressed.

Master, Lord Jesus Christ, only Son and Word of God the Father, who by your saving and life-giving sufferings have broken all the bonds of

[18] This formula is opposed by Galanes, *Conciliatio Ecclesiae Armenae cum Romana* (Rome, 1661) 2:604–605.

[19] See the texts that appear on pages 28–32, in Coptic and Arabic, in the Missal of Tuki, which is used by Catholic Copts. It was published in Rome in 1736, and the numbers in the original are in Coptic. A Latin translation appears in Renaudot, *Liturgiarum*, 1:103, and an English translation may be found in F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford, 1965) 148. A Latin version can also be found in the " 'Ακολυθία of Confession and Penance" of the Missal of Tuki (Rome, 1764) 136–138, used by Catholic Copts. The benediction in Latin can be found in Denzinger, *Ritus*, 1:439.

our sins; you who breathed into the faces of your holy disciples and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you will remit, they are remitted, whose sins you will retain, they are retained." Now, our Master, you have deigned, by the holy apostles, to give to their successors in the priestly ministry, in the bosom of your Holy Church, the faculty of remitting sins on earth, of binding and loosing all the bonds of iniquity: we now pray and beg your goodness, you who love humanity, on behalf of your servant whose head (your servants, my fathers, brothers and sisters who bow their heads) is bowed in the presence of your holy glory, that he (we) may obtain your mercy and that you break all the bonds of his (our) sins, which he (we) has (have) committed against you, whether consciously or unconsciously or by fear, in word, deed or by weakness. You, the Master, who know the weakness of human beings, in the good God who loves humanity, give him (us) the remission of his (our) sins.

The text of the prayer "Blessing":

Fill us once more with fear of you and guide us in your holy and good will, because you are our God, and may glory, honor and power be given you along with our Father and the life-giving Holy Spirit, consubstantial with you. . . . May the infirmities of your servants and me who officiate today be absolved. May they be absolved by the mouth of the Most Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and by the mouth of the one, holy Catholic and apostolic Church, and by the mouth of the twelve apostles, of the divine interpreter Mark, apostle, evangelist and martyr, of the apostolic St. Athanasius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril, St. Gregory and St. Basil, of the three hundred eighteen Fathers of Nicea, the one hundred fifty of Constantinople, the two hundred of Ephesus, the six hundred thirty of Chalcedon and by the mouth of our honored Father, the Archbishop Abba . . . and his auxiliary Bishop Abba . . . and by the mouth of my most humble self, because blessed and glorious is your holy name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

This is a deprecative formula, and it could not be otherwise, given the ancient tradition of the Coptic Church. There is no doubt that however much this is part of a detailed auricular confession, that confession is not considered, either by Orthodox or Catholic Copts, to effect the forgiveness of sins. The words added at the penitent's departure

have the same feel, because they take for granted the words of the absolution by the Son that they contain.[20] So they are no more than accessories for the Copts, given that Tuki did not include them in his Ἀκολυθία.

So it is not surprising that there is no rite of penance in Coptic rituals, which had been composed independently of the Latins. Eastern Christians, especially the Copts, did not have the methodical manner of the Latins. For them, the ritual books should contain only those things not found in any other liturgical book. For this reason the ritual excludes not only the Eucharist but also penance, which is preparatory to it and which, like that sacrament, is found in the missal.

6. *In the Ethiopian Tradition*

After the offering of the gifts at Mass, the celebrant gives the so-called "absolution to the Son," a prayer for the remission of sins directed to the Son. It is a deprecative absolution. The same formula is used in the administration of the sacrament of reconciliation and in the penitential celebration of the so-called rite of incense.[21]

II. LITURGICAL AND CANONICAL ASPECTS OF PENANCE

The Orthodox, and Eastern Catholics, according to the definitive doctrine of the ancient councils and synods, admit that penance is a sacrament and that it consists of the following elements: (a) a sensible sign, (b) matter, (c) form, (d) a judicial character, and (e) an effect. However, among certain of the Orthodox, especially the Nestorians, it has fallen into disuse.

The judicial character of penance is admitted by the Orthodox, especially the Greeks, who agree with the Catholics that Christ has given this power to the Church, as is attested in the works of the Fathers who defend it against the heretics.

1. *The Actions or the Matter of Penance*

All the Orthodox hold as a principle, even if they do not always observe it in practice, that all serious sins must be confessed. "Accord-

[20] Denzinger, *Ritus*, 1:101–102.

[21] L. Ligier, "Pénitence et Eucharistie en Orient: Théologie sur une interference de prières et de rites," *OCP* 29 (1963) 5–78.

ing to the rule, the confession should consider all serious sins. In practice, however, many penitents are reticent or make such generic accusations against themselves that their confessions remain rather dubious."[22] The Nestorians, who have allowed penance to fall into disuse, content themselves with a general confession made within the liturgy, while they receive, from the priest, an absolution that is also general. Individual auricular confession is no longer in use among the Nestorians.

The Orthodox writer Katsanevakis explains the doctrine in this way: "It is quite evident that the penitent ought to tell the confessor, with all sincerity, humility, modesty, and purpose of amendment, all his or her faults and ask for indulgence, mercy and God's pardon, promising to use all of his or her good will in order to avoid falling into sin again."[23]

2. *The Form*

All the Eastern Catholic synods affirm the doctrine of the authority of the confessor. The Orthodox also attest that the sacrament of penance is a true judgment and that the priest is a real judge.

The formulas of absolution are, as we have seen, either indicative (declarative) or deprecative. Calling a formula indicative implies that it involves the actual expression of power. To call a formula deprecative, on the other hand, indicates that the priest simply prays, manifesting his desire in the form of a prayer, that God will pardon the penitent. This latter is also sacramental, dogmatically speaking, if the words that the priest says, despite their being cast in an optative mood, indicate that the priest exercises some authority to absolve.

With the exception of the Copts, Eastern Catholics use an indicative formula. The Greeks also use the deprecative. The Russian Orthodox, and the Slavs in general, use the indicative, being under the influence of the Theological Academy of Kiev. The Greek formula is deprecative: "My spiritual son . . . I, a humble sinner, would not have the power on my own behalf to remit sins on earth, which belongs to God alone, were it not for the words 'Whose sins you will remit, they are remitted . . .' Trusting in this divine word, we say, All that which you have confessed to my humble self, that which you have ignored or forgotten to say, God pardons in this life and in the future."

[22] C. Gatti and C. Korolevskij, *I riti e le chiese orientali* (Genoa, 1942) 95.

[23] B. Katsenevakis, *I sacramenti della Chiesa Ortodossa* (Naples, 1954) 215.

The Syrian Jacobites and the Armenians have an indicative formula.[24] The Copts and the Ethiopians, on the other hand, use a deprecative formula.[25] "From a comparison of the two formulas, Orthodox and Roman, says Katsanevakis, "emerges the idea that in the Orthodox formula, the priest prays for the one confessing and asks divine mercy for that person. In the Roman Church, however, the priest, on his own authority, pardons the one making a confession. In the formula of absolution of the Roman Church, there appears to be, therefore, a certain priestly egoism that suffocates and covers over the great mercy of God. In the Orthodox formula there is a supplication of God, so it appears that the celebrant of the sacrament and the one forgiving the sins is God."[26]

The deprecative formula is held to be valid by the Catholic Church, provided that it has an indicative sense, according to the decree of the Council of Florence.

3. *The Minister*

The Orthodox do not distinguish clearly between the power of order and that of jurisdiction, holding that this latter is given in ordination, for which the authorization of the bishop is not intrinsic to the sacrament but merely a disciplinary precaution.[27] In order to make more evident the power of God, the action of the minister appears to be almost peripheral.

4. *The Seal*

The seal of confession is generally rigidly observed, and the violation of this obligation is punished. There have been, nevertheless, some "legal" violations, for instance, during the reign of Peter the Great in Russia, which were confirmed by a synod by means of a synodal circular on January 19, 1909. Today the secrecy of the confessional is faithfully observed by the Orthodox.

5. *The Time of Confession*

Practically all the Eastern synods have accepted the precept of annual confession made by canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and

[24] Denzinger, *Ritus,* 1:473.

[25] S.T.M. Semharay, *De sanctissimis sacramentis secundum ritum aethiopicum* (Rome, 1931) 66–74.

[26] Katsenevakis, *Sacramenti*, 207.

[27] Ibid., 222–223.

renewed by Trent. The Syrians, Malankarese, and the Copts do not make any firm determination of time, although they recommend the Easter season. The Ukrainians, Romanians, Maronites, Armenians, Melkites, and Malabarese all agree that confession must be made at least during the Easter season. The reasoning seems to be connected to the desire to make confession before the Easter communion. The custom of receiving communion at other times of the year is also normal among the Eastern Churches, especially during the forty day period preceding Christmas, on the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and on the Dormition of the Mother of God. Since communion should be preceded by confession, this is recommended in all the Eastern Churches.

6. *The Place of Confession*

All the Eastern Churches say that the church or a chapel, barring special cases, should be the normal place for hearing confessions. Confessions of women especially should be heard at the confessional seat, which has been adopted by all the Orthodox, with the exception of the Greeks and the Russians. While this is not necessary for the validity of the confession, it is often prescribed for its liceity. The Roman confessional is not used by any of the Churches.

It is not unusual that confessions be heard in homes or, for children, in schools. This is often the case among the Armenians, Greeks, and Russians.

7. *Orthodox Practice*

All the Orthodox recognize the necessity of confession for the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism. Therefore all the faithful, including priests, bishops, and patriarchs, are obligated to confession, although in some of the Churches, these latter, as well as deacons, are practically dispensed.

Some Orthodox Churches prescribe the first confession for children of six or seven years of age. The Copts hold for the first confession to take place at age sixteen, although a distinction is often made between boys at fourteen years of age, and girls at twelve.[28] Among the Armenians and Russians, the confession of children is done in a group and the priest gives a general absolution.

The Orthodox who practice confession do so three or four times a year, during Lent or on the more important feasts. There is also a

[28] See A. Shaguna, *Compendium des kanonischen Rechtes* (Darmstadt, 1868).

custom of annual confession. In all the churches there are those who do not go to confession at all. Slavs have the custom of confessing four times a year—at Christmas, Easter, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and the Dormition. Armenians are obliged to make confession at Epiphany and Easter as well as three other times—at the feasts of the Transfiguration, the Dormition, and the Exaltation of the Cross.

III. THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PENANCE

Until the end of the fifth century, penance was a possibility only once in the life of a Christian, while today it may be repeated and is concerned not only with some sins but with all sins. The necessity of confessing sins to a minister of the Church (originally only the bishop) is a function not only of the command of Christ to the Church to preach and to forgive sins (Luke 24:47; John 20:22-23) but also of the very fact of the incarnation of the Word. If God has been made human, one can no longer think of confessing sins directly to God, because this power has been given by God to the Son of Man (cf. Matt 9:6), the head of the Body, that is to say, of the Church. As a result, the ministerial process for the forgiveness of sins is visible. The one who has sinned gravely excommunicates himself or herself from the Eucharist, but the sinner is also excommunicated from the Mysteries by the one who is the steward of penance, the priest or bishop, to whom the sinner must confess if he or she is to be made once again a part of the ecclesial and Eucharistic communion. As a result, whether in East or West, penance is connected to the Eucharist both historically and theologically. There are also exceptions that permit a person in grave danger to receive communion without having confessed, although these always carry with them the obligation to do so as soon as possible, because, according to Cyprian, one can confess as long as one is in the world,[29] which is to say, as long as one is in the body.

The process of penance has a physical or bodily aspect because one who has sinned with the body ought to make reparation with the body. However, the Church prays and weeps along with the one undergoing the process of penance. That is why the Fathers insisted that penance did not disrupt one's membership in the Church.[30] Just as the commu-

[29] Cyprian, *Liber de lapsis:* PL 4:489.

[30] Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima:* PG 45:221; *Epistula canonica:* PG 5:233; Basil, *De iudicio Dei:* PG 31:661; *Moralia:* PG 31:716–723; John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio:* PG 47:644.

nity helps one to fulfill the commands and precepts, which one would not be able to do alone, it helps one to expiate sins against the commands and precepts. No sin is unforgivable and no sinner need forever be excluded from the Church, unless the sinner is hardened in lack of penitence, which is a sin against the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:31f.).

Only the Holy Spirit can give peace with the Church,[31] which is itself the sign of the forgiveness of sins. It is the Spirit who, invoked by the Church upon the Eucharistic gifts, transforms them into the body and blood of the Lord and who transforms the penitent into a reconciled Christian, worthy to offer oneself and so worthy to receive communion.

The Church is the means that God has established to reintegrate the human person into the *communio sanctorum.* The severity of the ἐπιτιμία (punishment) was in relationship to the desire of the Fathers to make this a reality in all communities. More than the exact fulfillment of the canonical penance, the Fathers of the fourth century, like Basil, were attentive to the disposition of the penitent. This is the sign of φιλανθρωπία, the mercy of God and the Church for humanity.

The ἐξομολόγησις, the liturgical form of ecclesiastical penance, ought to make the Church manifest, because it is the place of the new Christian morality. The Fathers, bishops, and doctors were all concerned with the integrity of its makeup. They judged and excluded the sinner, imposing a penance for the gradual readmittance into the community and to communion. In this way they exercised the ministry of binding and loosing, that is, how they made clear who did and who did not belong to the Church of Christ.

The question of penance and the disputes that surrounded it were in fact a battle for the sanctity of the Christian and the Church, inasmuch as the baptismal ideal is something that must be lived out daily. The Eastern Churches have retained patristic practices and principles, beginning with the apostolic canon 51, which prescribes that the bishop be the steward of penance. This task would be given to the priests when the community became larger. At Constantinople there was, by the fourth century, a priest especially charged with penance (πρεσβύτερον ἐπί τῆς μετάνοιας). From the tenth or eleventh century, this ministry would be fulfilled by monks, especially in the monasteries.

[31] St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto:* PG 32:82, 110.

This tendency on the part of the Orthodox to seek out human spiritual guides underlines the fact that people tended more to seek a charismatic than a hierarchical authority. But the ministry of forgiveness belongs to the Church, especially to the priesthood. Monks, as Origen, Evagrius, John Climacus, and others make so evident, are capable of ardent prayer and of discernment of the passions, physical, psychic, moral, or even demonic. In the twelfth century the canonist Balsamon would reaffirm the traditional distinction between that sort of a ministry and that of ἐξομολόγησις (canonical penance), which pertains properly to the bishops and priests.

Ἐξομολόγησις also has a therapeutic dimension. "Those who have received from God the power to bind and to loose are to act as physicians, attentive to finding the proper remedy for each of the penitent's faults."[32] The act of forgiveness is the heart of the relationship between God and the sinner, since the Lamb of God has forgiven all our faults, "erasing the record that stood against us, with its legal demands, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:14). The power to forgive comes from the Precious Blood of the Lamb who was pierced, who has taken upon himself the sin of the world.

The Johannine distinction (1 John 5:16-18) between sins that lead to death and others is the basis of the distinction, still in force, between mortal and venial sins—of which there exists no definitive list—or rather between those which are voluntary and involuntary, for which sacramental prayer seeks pardon, given that the penitent does not seek it for oneself or is not in a state of grace.

Simeon of Thessalonica asserts that public penance, which consisted of the two canonical levels of πρόσκλαυσις (the first stage of canonical penance: "weeping") and ὑπόπτωσις (the third stage of canonical penance: "prostration"), was used only rarely, because the private version, which consisted of ἀκρόασις (the second stage of canonical penance: "hearing") and σύστασις (the fourth and final stage of canonical penance: "assistance" at the Eucharist without receiving communion), was absolutely linked, under pain of excommunication, to absolute secrecy, the sacramental seal. Simeon's witness, albeit late, demonstrates the evolution from public to private penance, which was

[32] Concilium Quinisextum, can. 102: J. D. Mansi, *Collectio Conciliorum Oecumenicorum nova et amplissimia collectio* (Graz, 1960) 11, col. 987.

certainly connected to the greater secrecy available in the latter regarding the sins confessed.[33]

Absolution came to be given after confession and the performance of some satisfaction, or rather some penitential act (ἐπιτιμία), which was understood to be a remedy, not a punishment, inasmuch as the sacrament was understood to be therapeutic. John Chrysostom said: "The mere passage of time is of no importance. We do not ask if the medication has often been applied to the wound, but whether the medication has been useful. The time for ending the treatment is a function of the state of the wound."[34]

The Byzantine liturgy reinforces the idea that the Church does not desire so much that the sinner no longer sin, but that the sinner live in a state of permanent penance: "Open to me the gates of penance, and give me tears to wash away the impurity from my heart, O Christ."

The question of the deprecative formula of absolution shows, according to Androutsos, that "the cleric is almost hidden, so to speak, behind the sacrament."[35] The prayer that precedes confession, along with Psalm 50, shows the ἀποκατάστασις of the sinner in the Church, that is, the readmission and reconciliation by which all sin is expelled from the Body of Christ.

The Byzantines hold that the effect of penance consists in the remission not only of sin and eternal suffering but also of temporal punishment. In this they differ from Catholics.

Based on the thought of the Fathers, especially St. Basil, Orthodox theology holds that holy communion is itself an act of forgiveness and effects the remission of sin.[36] Penance makes clear once again in a gradual and visible way one's belonging to the Church, which the Eucharist itself effects. In this way Eucharist and penance may be seen as mutual conditions of belonging to the Church.

[33] *De sacro templo:* PG 155:357.

[34] John Chrysostom, *De sacredotio:* PG 48:644.

[35] C. Androutsos, Δογματική τῆς ὀρθοδοξου ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας (Athens, 1907) 383–384.

[36] Ligier, *Pénitence,* 35–48, 77–78.

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6

Reconciliation in the West

I. PENANCE FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY TO THE CAROLINGIAN ERA

The extreme state of decay into which public penance had fallen made conditions ripe for the appearance of a new penitential discipline. After some initial resistance, this new approach entirely vanquished the older, resulting ultimately in the complete disappearance of the ancient discipline.[1]

1. *Lists and Penance*

In some discussion of this period of the historical development of the rites of penance, one encounters the term "tariff." In this context the word is easily misunderstood and ambiguous at best, since it seems to imply that some price (i.e., tariff) had to be paid in order to obtain reconciliation.

However, the term *tarifa* is in fact of Arabic origin and simply means "list" or "catalogue." In the context of the historical periods of which we are now speaking, it refers to a sort of penal code, that is, a list or catalogue of sins along with their relative punishments.

Such lists were contained in a new instrument used by confessors, the so-called *liber paenitentialis,* in which sins were catalogued along with the relative penalties. In this way the confessor's role was made easier. All he needed to do was apply the penalty stipulated for a particular sort of sin, totaling up the full number of weeks, months, or years of penance required.

[1] Antonio Santantoni, *La Penitenza: Una pagina di storia antica, utile per i nostri tempi* (Turin, 1983) 81–116.

2. *Reactions*

At the time, this gave rise to great scandal, for two reasons:

a) The priest (or sometimes a non-ordained monk) became, all of a sudden, minister of a sacrament that had hitherto been reserved for the bishop.

b) Penance became repeatable. This caused the absolute collapse of what had been, since the time of Hermas, an absolute principle, namely, that penance could be sought out only once in a person's lifetime.

The most thoroughgoing condemnation of this new practice is found in the famous canon 3 of the Third Council of Toledo (589), in which the Spanish bishops rejected it unreservedly and in the harshest language. The text is important enough to be quoted in its entirety.[2]

3. *A Form of Penance of Celtic and Monastic Origin*

The Celtic origin of the new penitential discipline has been often noted. The truth is that this new form could only have arisen in the most peripheral regions of the empire, on the islands of Ireland and Britain, where the traditional canonical discipline had never been used.[3]

[2] The vigor of the condemnation made by the Fathers of this council was more than justified. Imagine what would happen today if someone suggested in the West that the sacrament of confirmation was repeatable simply at the pleasure of some ordinary presbyter. And yet that was exactly what had happened in that time. Canon 3 reads:

We have learned that, in certain churches in Spain, the faithful confess their sins, not according to the canonical form, but in an absolutely unfitting *(foedissime)* fashion. Every time that they have sinned, they ask the priest to be reconciled. In order to repress this execrable presumption *(tam exsecrabilis praesumptio),* our sacred assembly has decreed that penance must take place in the manner established by our Fathers. Therefore, those who repent of their sins will be deprived of communion and placed among the penitents, to receive the laying on of hands. When their time of penitence is over, they will be readmitted to communion, according to the judgment of the bishop. As far as those who fall once again into serious sin are concerned, whether this occurs during their time of penitence or after their reconciliation, they will be punished with all the severity provided for in the ancient canons.

[3] Compare the Penitential of Theodore, I, 12 (8th century), in B. Poschmann, *La pénitence et l'onction des malades: Histoire des dogmes* (Paris, 1966) 4:112.

On these remote islands evangelization had been done by monks and the hierarchy was organized along essentially monastic lines. In this context, all pastoral, liturgical, and juridical practice was shaped by monastic models.[4]

The monk, since he had embraced a form of life that was essentially a state of perpetual penitence, was dispensed from both the state of public penitence and the practices associated with it. Having entered the monastery, or cenobium, he would have found a penitential discipline that, both in its form and content, was a great deal like that from which he had been exempted by his entry into religion.

Almost all the monastic rules contained a penal code imbued with a spirit of tremendous rigor,[5] the purpose of which was to repress the tendency toward laxity that is always lying in wait for even the most fervent religious community.

It is clear that these penitential practices were intended to be valid for people who, because of their state in the Church, would never have had recourse to canonical penitence. As a result, this was a penitence that did not need to have all the characteristics of public penitence, especially its one-time only, unrepeatable character.

But the Irish monks, famous for the extreme asceticism of their lives and the severity of their mortifications, came to consider their penitential practices good for all people, even for lay people. Just as spiritually far removed from the theological and juridical subtleties of Rome and the rest of Europe as they were geographically distant, they began to reconcile lay penitents in the same way as they were accustomed to reconcile monks who had done things deserving of punishment. This was done without full consciousness that the two sorts of cases were dissimilar, whether considered theologically or juridically. Right here is the key for understanding the origin, development, difficulties, and eventual success of the new penitential discipline.[6] It is in the meeting

[4] Ibid., 89–94.

[5] Here we will refer to the *Institutiones monasticae* of John Cassian, the *Regula Benedicti*, the *Regula Magistri*, and the *Regula Coenobialis* of Columban.

[6] Given the nature of this essay, we can only suggest that the reader interested in a complete and fully documented study of this hypothesis turn to A. Santantoni, "La confessione dei pensieri e delle colpe segrete nella Regula Benedicti," *Benedictina* 28 (1981) 647–680, and the work "La penitenza," by the same author, referred to in footnote 1. One should also refer to G. Piana, "Peccati e penitenze nel

of the canonical and monastic disciplines that one finds hints that shed light on one of the most fascinating mysteries of liturgical history.

The first thing that leaps to one's eyes is the extraordinary similarity between the two disciplines. While they do differ from one another, the various monastic codes nevertheless have a great deal in common. They are all modeled on the structure of public penitence, although they change elements of the structure and, on occasion, the language. A synopsis of the two follows:

Disciplina monastica	*Disciplina canonica*
an infraction or sin	a sin
confession to the abbot (or to the superior or to the community)	confession to the bishop
the threat of excommunication (i.e., exclusion from community life) according to a mode and for a duration determined by the abbot	entrance into penitence and into the *ordo poenitentium* according to a mode and for a duration determined by the bishop
actio satisfactionis	*actio paenitentiae*
–exclusion from the common table (meals taken at a later time)	–for those who have fallen into the same sin: no one may sit at table with the penitent
–social isolation (no one may speak with them)	
–the loss of one's place in choir	–assignment to a place at some distance from the rest of the assembly, where they are required to remain kneeling even on Sunday
–exclusion from the reception of communion	–exclusion from the reception of communion
–exclusion from the church, remaining outside or at the door during the *opus Dei*	–exclusion from the church for those known *flentes*

Medioevo," in *A pane e acqua: Peccati e penitenze nel medioevo: Il Penitenziale di Burcardo di Worms* (Novara, 1986) 7–40.

–prostration at the feet of the abbot and confreres as they enter the church, while asking for their prayers and mercy	–prostrations, tears and prayers asked of the "saints" as they enter the churh
–loss of wine and oil	–abstinence from meat and other fats
–fasts	–fasts
–lashings	–perfect continence
satisfactio	*reconciliatio*
–readmission to choir, the common table and the common life of the community, at the abbot's direction	–the penitent is readmitted to the Eucharist and the reception of communion according to the judgment of the bishop and with the laying on of his hands[7]

Although there are undeniable similarities between the two, these should not hide two essential differences: (1) canonical penitence was not repeatable, whereas the monastic penitence could be repeated an indefinite number of times; (2) the former was ordinarily administered by the bishop, whereas the latter was administered by the abbot, who need not have been a priest. In addition to these major differences, others are evident as well: monastic penitence was normally of a brief duration, while canonical penitence could last for an entire lifetime, or more normally, for several years.

In other words, while canonical penitence had what one would today recognize as a clearly sacramental function (i.e., the forgiveness of sins), monastic penitence had an ascetic or disciplinary function and played a role in the spiritual formation of the monk and was part of the ordinary course of life in the monastery.

This is all perfectly clear to St. Benedict and is formulated in a clear and precise manner in his Rule. He is clearly aware of the distinction between a disciplinary infraction and a sin. For the former he prescribes a therapy of public penance; for the latter, he is well aware of the care and privacy that is needed for the wounds of souls. In the first case, the confession is made to the abbot, who then proceeds with a public sanction, with the intention of giving an example and so too a

[7] Santantoni, *Penitenza,* 91–92.

helpful admonition to the entire community. In the second case, the sin is confessed to the abbot and then to the *senior spiritalis,* who was only rarely a priest and who, because of his experience and humanity, would know how to enlighten his sinful confrere, evaluate the nature of the sin, and keep it secret.[8] His correction would be entirely interior, secret, and spiritual.

This clarity is not at all evident in the *Regula Magistri* (RM), a work of great prestige in the monastic world of the time and one that served Benedict as a source for his own Rule. In it, both the terminology and the concepts they are intended to express seem dangerously imprecise. So much is this the case that it is not at all clear whether, for the Master, there was a clear distinction between the two practices. He seems to imply that monastic penitence was, like its canonical counterpart, unrepeatable, at least for those who had committed a certain type of sin ("for this sin"); to affirm the opposite would be "heresy."[9]

What is only hinted at in the *Regula Magistri* is made quite definite in the *Regula Coenobialis* of St. Columban. There the two sorts of penitence are fully assimilated to each other. When one compares the terminology, practices, and concepts of the *Regula* with the Penitential of the great Irish monk, one sees that they are identical. What is more, the norms that regulate the lives of monks are also used, in exactly the same fashion, for the laity.[10]

4. *Penitential Terminology in the Monastic Rules*

An important contribution to research into the origins of the form of penance in which sins were listed can be found in the penitential terminology of the Rules of the great founders and masters of Western monasticism. Here we will limit ourselves to remarks about four of them: Benedict, Cassian, the Master, and Columban.

St. Benedict must be at the center of this discussion. In his Rule he speaks twelve and nine times, respectively, of *excommunicare/excommu-*

[8] RB 46:5-6.

[9] The text is of fundamental importance and should be more widely known: "When these tearful words are finished, the abbot will immediately raise him up by the hand, saying to him, 'See to it, brother, see to it henceforth you sin no more so as to be obliged to do penance for this vice a second time, for the obligation to do penance a second time would cut you off into heresy'" (RM 14:67-69, trans. L. Eberle, *The Rule of the Master* [Kalamazoo, Mich., 1977] 157).

[10] Santantoni, *Penitenza,* 97–98.

nicatio in relation to the monks and uses each of the words *satisfacere/satisfactio* nine times. On the other hand, he uses each of the words *paenitere/paenitentia* only once. Undoubtedly, Benedict knew Roman doctrine and discipline too well simply to give himself over to crude simplifications.

But the West also had a well-known master, Cassian, whose language, if always used with precision in his great work, the *Institutes,* could also be seen as the source of less rigorous and exact usage, especially in the part of Europe that lay north of the Alps. When he wrote words like *paenitentia, paenitere, paenitentiam diluere, paenitentia satisfacere,* and others like *satisfactio, semetipsum ad satisfactionem submittere, ad satisfactionem obtulere,* etc., he used them with precision. But Cassian's preference for the words *paenitere/paenitentia* (not merely the number of times he uses them but also and especially the prominence he gives them: the monk does not only make *paenitentia,* but it must also be *digna,* that is, proportional to the offense, and *publica;* it will lead to *reconciliatio,* which must also be *publice*), even if it does not indicate a certain theological uncertainty on Cassian's part, could well lead to less orthodox understandings on the part of an author less refined than the master of Marseilles.

That is exactly what happened with the Rule of the Master, which, as has been said, continues to prefer the classical monastic terminology (the words *excommunicatio* and *satisfactio* are used forty-three and sixteen times, respectively) but also uses the canonical language (*paenitentia* and *reconciliatio*). Even if he uses these only a few times (five times and once, respectively), the way in which he uses them justifies the suspicion that the Master misunderstands their meaning.

However, the one who definitively crossed the boundaries from one realm of meaning to the other was Columban. In his *Regula Coenobialis* he not only uses *paenitentia* and *reconciliatio* almost without exception, but he also uses them in a context that today we would definitely recognize as sacramental.

Chapter 10 of Columban's *Regula Coenobialis* is a veritable penitential for the use of monks. The faults, infractions, and sins of the monks are meticulously described; a particular penalty is associated with each: three lashes, six lashes, twelve psalms, twenty-four psalms, fifty lashes, a year or a day of penitence.

The terminology is exactly like that of the penitentials, among which there is one that bears the name of St. Columban. The terms

used are, in reality, variations on one key root, as the following list will indicate: *paenitentia, paenitere, paenitentiam agere, debitum paenitentiae, frater indigens paenitentia, ita paenitentia eius, anno (quadraginta, septem diebus) paenitere, in pane et aqua paenitere, publica diluere paenitentia.* The monks who have been subjected to penitence are repeatedly called *paenitentes*. There is the very occasional use of *satisfacere/satisfactio,* but these are comparatively lightweight when compared with so much *paenitentia!*

Much can be learned from the beginning of the penal code in Columban's Rule: *Diversitas culparum diversitatis paenitentiae medicamento sanari debet*.[11] The same idea appears at the beginning of Columban's Penitential: *Paenitentia vera est, paenitenda non admittere, sed admissa deflere. Sed quia hanc multorum fragilitas, ut non dicam, rumpit, mensurae noscendae sunt paenitentiae*.[12]

It is clear that the two codes are speaking of the same reality, that is, of sins and of the penitence that must be undergone in order for the sins to be forgiven. According to Columban, all sins, whether serious or less than serious, must be conquered and cured by the same remedy: humble confession and fervent penance.

"Therefore, brethren, it has been set down by the holy Fathers that we confess all our sins, not only those which are capital *(ut demus confessionem de omnibus, non solum capitalibus criminibus)* but also the more serious occasions of carelessness, because confession and penance free from death *(quia confessio et paenitentia de morte liberat)*. Therefore, not even the least of one's sins are passed over in confession *(Ergo nec ipsa parva a confessione sunt negligenda peccata)*."[13]

This closes the circle. Canonical penitence, from which monks had been exempted, had served as a model for the organization of the penitential practices of monastic life. A clear awareness of the theological and canonical differences between the two disciplines allowed the monks to take advantage of the medicinal, ascetic, and spiritual virtues of monastic correction.

With time, with distance from Rome, and with a lessening of the theological and juridical distinctions between the two sorts of peniten-

[11] Columban, *Regula Coenobialis,* 10.
[12] Columban, *De paenitentiarum mensura taxanda liber,* 1.
[13] Ibid.

tial practice, a process takes place whereby the conviction gradually grows that what is appropriate for the monk is also appropriate for the layperson. If the monk can undergo a penitential correction repeatedly, why should it be forbidden to the laity? Monastic penance had been modeled on the canonical discipline. However, since that had been in a state of decline for centuries,[14] this new model ended by replacing it on the Continent as well.

5. The Different Goals of Confession

From what has already been said, it is evident that the new style and understanding of penitence would encompass both a variety of reasons for confession as well as varying methods for the expiation of sins. Until this time, these had found their expression in different parts of the Church's life. However, one can say without fear of contradiction that the Middle Ages would see the triumph of confession in all its possible forms, however surprising and unforeseeable from our contemporary perspective.

a) The confession of the ascetic

More than a confession in a strictly juridical and sacramental sense, this was an occasion for spiritual direction. The disciple laid out for his master the state of his soul, his thoughts and his deeds, so that the master could judge and evaluate them and give him some counsel as a result.

The master would not be able to help the disciple without knowing the temptations, the weaknesses, as well as where he had given in and sinned as a result. So this was a sort of confession that had as its aim counsel, and was especially recommended and made use of by monks and religious. With the wisdom and help of an elder, they would come to know themselves better and recognize the snares of the devil, especially when he presented himself in the guise of an angel of light.[15]

b) The confession of the sinner

During the time period we are considering, there is no pardon without some sort of expiation, that is, some form of suffering, whether moral

[14] P. M. Gy, "Penance and Reconciliation," in *CP* 3:102ff.; B. Poschmann, *La pénitence et l'onction des malades* (Paris, 1966) 110–111.

[15] John Cassian, *Conferences,* II, IV, XX. See especially, II:2, 10, 13 and IV:9. Even more enthusiastic about this practice than Cassian, if that is possible, was the Master (RM 15). SCh 42, 109–137, 166–187; 64, 56–72.

or physical. Pardon was understood to have been won by the payment of pain or shame.[16]

But the penance ought to be in proportion to the sin. This is possible only if the confessor, whose task it would be to set out a penalty, also knows what sins it is for which the penitent is paying.

This would be the foundation of the Scholastic doctrine that saw penance as a juridical act *(ad instar actus iudicialis)*. This also explains the insistence on the integrity of the confession. Failing to list all of one's sins, according to species and number, would make it impossible for the confessor-judge to render an adequate judgment, which is indispensable for the formulation of a sentence and the imposition of a penance *(satisfactio)*.[17] This doctrine is part of the theological vision that has been imported from criminal law (where reconciliation is a reward following upon expiation) and became the foundation of Scholasticism, the Magisterium,[18] and post-Tridentine theology.[19]

c) Confession to God alone

In 813, in the midst of the Carolingian reaction to the new developments in the rites of penance, a canon 33 of the Council of Châlon-sur-Saône took a position, in a most solemn and binding way, on the value and role of confession made to God alone.

This had been known since the patristic era. Testimony thereto may be found in authors as diverse as John Chrysostom and Lanfranc, to say nothing of Cassian, Ambrose, and many others.[20] It is only in the

[16] The Fathers affirm this idea many times, both directly and indirectly. One example will suffice here: "I beg you, my brethren, in the name of the Church; I pray and exhort you in my name and in the name of all. Do not be ashamed of the works of penitence that you must undertake. Do not hesitate, but run as fast as possible to the remedy that is appropriate for the illness. Give your hearts to affliction. Dress yourselves in sackcloth. Strew ashes on your heads. Fast. Let yourselves be consumed by sorrow. Give yourselves up to the prayers of the whole community. Insofar as you do not spare yourselves, God will repay you" (Pacianus, *Parenesi,* n.12: PL 13:1082–1090).

[17] Council of Trent, Session XIV, cap. 5 (H. Denzinger-C. Bannwart, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei,* ed. 21–23 (Freiburg i. Br., 1937) 899; Mansi 33:94–95. Poschmann, *Pénitence,* 124.

[18] Council of Trent, Session XIV, cap. 2.5.6 (Denzinger, *Enchiridion,* 895, 899, 902; Mansi 33:92, 94–95. See also canon 9 (Denzinger, *Enchiridion,* 919); 33, 101.

[19] A. Piolanti, *De sacramentis* (Turin, 1962) 374–377.

[20] "In the ancient Church, just as in the High Middle Ages and also in the penitential books, the accusation of sins made to God alone, the so-called *confessio Deo*

eleventh century that this falls into disuse, a victim of the new ideas about the nature of penance.

However, the text of Châlon cannot be ignored. It does not report the idea of a single theologian but the ruling of a synod that takes a position on two propositions that might seem irreconcilable and pronounces them both valid, legitimate, and useful for souls.[21] No objections to the conciliar teaching were raised. Particularly worthy of attention are the reasons for their teaching: we confess to God alone because only he forgives sins; we confess to the priest because he teaches us how to obtain pardon.

In the eleventh century this text would no longer be useful to the new theology and sacramental law and was either forgotten or corrected. Burkhard of Worms would give an interpretation of it worthy of reflection.[22]

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solo, had never been challenged. . . . One may cite, without exhausting the possibilities, numerous witnesses to this understanding" (C. Vogel, *Il peccatore e la penitenza nel Medioevo* (Turin, 1988) 2:164. The principle of the accusation of sins in the privacy of one's conscience to God alone would be seriously challenged only at the beginning of the twelfth century. It would survive insofar as venial sins are concerned, and even serious sins in the absence of a confessor, although these would have to be confessed at the first opportunity.

[21]"Some say that it is necessary to confess one's sins to God alone, others that they need to be confessed to the priests. These customs, both of which are in force in the Church, are sources of great benefit. In this way we confess our sins to God alone—to the God who alone can forgive them—and we say with David 'I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the guilt of my sin"'" (Psalm 31[32]:5). On the other hand, according to the teaching of the Apostle (James 5), we confess our sins to one another in order to be reconciled. The confession made to God alone purifies us of our sins. That which we make to the priests teaches us how to purify ourselves of our sins. God, the author, the one who gives us salvation, gives us pardon, on the one hand by the operation of his invisible power and on the other by the healers of souls (the confessors). Vogel, *Peccatore,* 112–113.

[22] The theological value of the teaching of Châlon-sur-Saône was apparent to Burkhard of Worms, who, two centuries later, wrote: "Some say that one's sins ought to be confessed to God alone, as the Greeks do, while others say that they ought to be confessed to the priest, as the entire Holy Church does; . . . In this way we confess our sins to God alone—to God who alone forgives them—*and as is appropriate for the saints.* . . . Confession made to God alone—*as is appropriate for the just*—purifies us . . ." (*Decreto* XIX, can. 145. The expressions in italics are Burkhard's glosses.) Vogel, *Peccatore,* 165.

6. *Equivalents*

A characteristic of this new sort of penance, where sins are listed, is the concept of equivalents. The introduction of this new sort of penance, with extremely severe penalties for single sins, might well have had the paradoxical effect of leaving things as they had been, because of this very severity (for example, for one of the more serious sins, a penance of somewhere between some few weeks and seven years of fasting would be imposed). Multiplying these penalties by the number of times a sin might have been committed, one arrives at an extremely long penance that might not be satisfied in an entire lifetime.[23]

It was thought, therefore, to commute the long periods prescribed for penances into shorter ones. These would be intensive, however, and would be considered the equivalents of the longer periods. In this fashion several years of fasting could be expiated in a few days.[24] The equivalents were also codified and books of equivalents appeared.

[23] From the Penitential of Bede (eighth century), quoted in Vogel, *Peccatore,* 61–63: "1. A young man who sins with a young virgin: one year of fasting. 2. If the sin was committed one time only, the penalty will be less. 3. If the young woman and the young man are twenty years old, they will fast three times for forty days each time. This is in addition to the official days of fast. 4. If, because of this sin, the two are reduced to slavery, they will only fast for forty days. 5. If the woman is a widow, and therefore a woman who has already lost her virginity, they will fast for one year and observe the official fast days during the following year. 6. If the sinful relations led to a birth, they will fast for two years, and in a less rigorous fashion for the two subsequent years. 7–9. If a religious has sinful relations with a lay woman, the monk will fast for three years, the woman for two. If this relationship has led to a birth they will fast for four years. If they kill the baby, there will be seven years of fast. Deacons who are not monks will do penance like the monks who are not ordained. A priest will do seven years of penance. 10. If a layman has sinful relations with a nun, there will be seven years of penance for the layman and three years for the nun. 11. If a monk has sinful relations with a nun, there will be seven years of penance.

[24] The treatise on penitential equivalents (Ireland, sixth century) as quoted in Vogel, *Peccatore,* 99–100. "1. To commute a fast of two days: the recitation of one hundred psalms, and, in addition, one hundred genuflections or fifteen hundred genuflections and seven canticles. 2. To commute a fast of three days: To stand for a day and a night, without sleeping—at least—or the recitation of fifty psalms three times with the corresponding canticles, or the recitation of the Office of twelve Hours with twelve prostrations for every Hour, with the arms in the form of a cross. 3. To commute a fast of one year: To pass three days on the tomb of one who has died (a saint?), without drinking or eating or sleeping, and without changing one's clothes. During this time, the sinner will recite psalms or will recite

Most notable is the absolute disparity of judgment and the totally arbitrary nature of the sanctions.[25]

7. The Carolingian Restoration

It was the equivalents that posed the greatest risk to the future of the new forms of penance. The Carolingian councils of the ninth century form a nearly unanimous chorus against their arbitrary nature and the irrelevance of their penalties. Forgiveness is too easy, the sanctions are too diverse, the penalties are too easy. All this without having said anything about using money to obtain pardon and reconciliation without having fasted for a single day.[26] A tremendous outcry resulted which threatened the penitential books with being thrown on the fire.[27]

However, this return to ancient strictness would not survive. Finally, a principle was formulated that remained in force for centuries, until the triumph of High Scholasticism. The principle was clearly a compromise between rigorists and those who defended more recent developments: for public sins there should be a public penance, but for private sins there should be a private penance.[28] This practice had not been unknown even in antiquity and had always been observed, at least for clerics.

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the Office of the Hours according to the judgment of the priest (who has imposed the penance). 4. Another commutation for a fast of one year: The sinner will chant psalms and canticles and will recite the choral Office. During this prayer he will make twelve genuflections. All this is after having confessed his sins before the priest and the people."

[25] "The penitential tasks contained in the booklets that are in the hands of our priests are so confused, contradictory among themselves, and so lacking in authority that it is impossible to apply them." Ebbo of Rheims, *Epistola Ebbonis ad Halitgarium,* ca. 850 (PL 105:652D–654A). Vogel, *Peccatore,* 157.

[26] "Charity is necessary for penitents who are fasting, so that their sins may be forgiven more rapidly and completely by God. . . . However, charity ought not to serve, contrary to a dangerous custom and contrary to the will of all, to shorten or make easier the penitential fast, nor any other works imposed by the priest for sins committed. Rather, charity serves to reinforce conversion" (Council of Cloveshoe [747], can. 26; Mansi 12:403–404).

[27] "It seemed necessary to all of us that all bishops search out these inauthentic books in his diocese and have them burned" (Council of Paris [829], can. 32; Mansi 14, 559–560.

[28] Cf. the Capitulary of Saxony (775–790), cap. 14. See also Theodulf of Orléans († 821), *Capitula ad presbyteros parochiae suae,* cap. 30; PL 105:200C–201A, and Hrabanus Maurus († 856) *De clericorum institutione ad Heistulphum archiepiscopum* II, 30: PL 107:342D–343C.

Aside from these two forms, there was also a third, which was a mixture of the two and was so widespread as to give life to one of the fundamental realities of medieval life, one that would contribute even to the highest levels of cultural development, the pilgrimage.[29]

8. *The Triumph of Confession*

In antiquity there was an absolutely firm principle: only pain and suffering, both physical and moral, could remit sin.[30] In the Middle Ages, however, a different principle developed. The shame of confession itself was able, along with true repentance, to obtain the grace of forgiveness and reconciliation.[31] Confession to a priest was probably the norm but was not the only possibility. Benedict, in the passage cited above, speaks of confession to a *senior spiritalis,* who would not necessarily have been a priest. Columban says something even more startling when he says that confession may be made to "anyone to whom it would be more convenient to do so."[32] The Romano-German Pontifical desires that either the bishop or a presbyter hear the confession and assign the penance "because to them have been given the keys of heaven," but does not exclude, in cases of necessity and in the absence of a presbyter, the ministry of a deacon.[33] Even in the eleventh century, Lanfranc, abbot of Bec, teacher of St. Anselm of Aosta, and later archbishop of Canterbury, will say that "we may confess our secret sins to a cleric of whichever rank . . . and if a cleric is not to be found, regardless of rank, to whom one may make confession, an honest man is to be chosen, wherever he may be found. . . . A pure man may purify a sinful man in the absence of a cleric. We read that certain of the Fathers directed souls; however, it is not said that they were in Orders."[34]

[29] Poschmann, *Pénitence,* 131–133.

[30] This was the principle behind the penitential practice of flagellation, whether imposed by another or freely undertaken by an individual. Poschmann, *Pénitence,* 134.

[31] This was the triumph of a principle of St. Augustine, one which is found in his Rule. He pardons a religious who freely confesses his own sin but severely punishes one who keeps it hidden. See the Rule of Augustine, 29: "If he confesses of his own will, he is pardoned and prayed for."

[32] Columban, *Regula,* 10.

[33] *PRG,* XCIX, 44.

[34] Lanfranc of Canterbury, *Confessione libellus:* PL 150:626–632.

In the tales of the knights one finds knights who, near to death and lacking a priest to whom they can confess, reveal their sins to a soldier, to a horse, to the hilt of their sword, to a tree, etc.[35]

And there was always confession made to God alone, a final recourse even in the time of Lanfranc, when no confessor was available.

9. *The Ritual of the New Form of Penance*

Aside from partial and unofficial witnesses, one must wait until the tenth century to discover the details of the complete ritual associated with this new form of penance, when it appears in the Romano-German Pontifical.[36] In order not to lose too much time on details, we will limit ourselves here to listing in order the various stages of the rite.

a) The penitent approaches the confessor of his own free will and asks to confess (n. 1).

b) The confessor questions the penitent on the principal mysteries of the faith: *Credis . . . ? Credo* (n. 5).

c) What follows is worthy of attention. First, the penitent is admonished to forgive those who have in any way offended him or her, because the Lord pardons those who pardon. Then the penitent is admonished to detach himself or herself from any affection to the sin that the penitent has committed, because "no medicine can bring relief as long as the sword is still in the wound" (nn. 6–7).

d) There follows a long list of thirty-three questions on sins that might be confessed. Each is associated with the particular penance that would be imposed (13). There are questions on one's life, work, on the condition of the penitent, on the way in which a person has carried out the tasks proper to his or her state in life, condition and profession (n. 14).

e) There follows a list of questions called "*de minoribus*," that is, questions about less serious sins (n. 15).

[35] C. Vogel, "Les rituels de la pénitence tarifée," in *Liturgia, opera divina e umana: Studi sulla riforma liturgica offerti a S.E. Mons. Annibale Bugnini in occasione del suo 70º compleanno* (Rome, 1982) 419–422.

[36] *PRG*, CXXXVI. One must make mention as well of a *Missa post confessionem*, which seems to end the rite with the communion of the reconciled penitent: "*Post communionem:* Look with mercy upon this your servant and by these sacraments which we have received" (no. 5). The use of the plural is not absolute proof but is certainly a hint of what must have taken place.

f) When the confessor imposes the penance, he must remain conscious of all that has been said: age, condition, social rank, gender, etc. All people are not able to bear the same penance, nor do all sins, even if materially identical, warrant the same penance. Above all, any penance that would reveal the nature of the sin that had been committed must be avoided (n. 16).

g) The confessor ascertains the sincerity of repentance on the part of the penitent, the seriousness with which he regards what has been said, and his faith in the power of the sacrament (nn. 17–22).

h) Finally, the penitent is invited to confess his or her sins in his or her own words *(rusticis verbis)* (n. 23).

i) The sinner lies prostrate on the floor and recites Psalm 22. Then a prayer is recited from among the many which are available.

j) Nothing is said of reconciliation or the time when it is given, but the presence, immediately afterward, of the *Missa post confessionem* (already mentioned in footnote 36) causes one to think that the penitent might be reconciled right away [37] and that he or she would go to communion immediately.

k) The widespread nature of these customs signals the passage from the ancient phase of the rites of penance to the Scholastic synthesis on the sacrament of penance.

II. THE RITUAL OF PUBLIC PENANCE FROM THE TENTH CENTURY TO DURANDUS

We owe our knowledge of the ritual of penance in the tenth century to the Romano-German Pontifical. It gives us a very good idea of what innovations had been made with respect to the ancient rite. Lent was the preferred time for penance. Those who were not required to undergo the discipline of penance were free to associate themselves with the penitents in order to prepare themselves with greater fervor for the celebration of the paschal mystery.

Great importance began to be given during this period to the celebration of the first day of Lent, the day that would shortly come to be called Ash Wednesday. Entry into penitence came during a celebration in which, aside from the laying on of hands (according to the Roman

[37] From elsewhere we know that if the penitent asks for reconciliation right away, it is given at this point.

custom), there was added the imposition of ashes and the cilice (a Frankish custom). There was also an expulsion of the penitents from the church, a sort of "excommunication" that would last until the day of reconciliation, the Thursday known as *in cena domini* (according to the Roman custom). The *PRG* gives us a point-by-point, meticulous, one might almost say prolix, description (*PRG,* II, 99. 44-80). This is worth spending some time on, as we will with other rituals from the time in question, because there is no other way to get as direct a feel for the developments in the rite.

The penitential path begins on Ash Wednesday. The *sacerdos* admonishes all those present on the duty to confess at the beginning of the fast and to dispose oneself with great care to carry out the works of real penitence. They will return for reconciliation on the Thursday called *in cena domini*. Provision is made for immediate reconciliation for those who would find it impossible to return or for those whom *ita forte hebes est* and would not want to return for reconciliation. Only the bishop and the presbyter (always called *sacerdos* according to a custom which had lasted for centuries and which would endure) may fulfill this ministry. In their absence *diaconus suscipiat penitentiam ac det sanctam communionem* (n. 44).

There follows a long section dedicated to the examination of the faith and the sins of the penitents. Account must be taken of the gender, age, and condition of the penitent: "whether they are rich or poor, free or in servitude, a child, an adolescent, a young person or an old person, whether they are educated or ignorant, wise or foolish, lay or cleric, monk or bishop, priest or deacon, subdeacon, lector or some other sort of cleric, married or unmarried, a virgin or an adult woman, canon or monk, weak or infirm, healthy or ill." All this must be kept in mind while deciding what penance to impose. Some will be asked to distribute charity, others to fast, and to others will be given frequent genuflections, or they may be told to stand for long periods with their arms apart, as though they were *in cruce* (nn. 47–49).

The series of questions began by focusing on the fundamental dogmas of the faith. One question was especially interesting. The penitent was asked whether he was ready to forgive those who had sinned against him or her. If the answer to this question was negative, the penitent was to be sent away (n. 50).

There follows an extremely long list, in fairly stereotypical language, of sins of which one might be accused. Clearly, this is supposed to be

all-inclusive. However, it is not so clear how, or even if, it is to be personalized by the penitent (n. 50a). The confessor says the *Misereatur.* The penitent kneels upon the floor, holding his hands in a gesture of supplication and, *blando ac flebili vultu,* says that he wants to accuse himself of any sins that he might have ignored or forgotten. Having said this, he prostrates himself on the floor and bewails his sins with tears. The confessor lets him stay in this position for some time. Then he raises him up and imposes the penance. It is recommended that confessors not impose fasts *quia non sunt in sua potestate* (nn. 51–55). The confessor *imponat* the seven penitential psalms and together they recite the Our Father. There follows a series of nine prayers (nn. 56–64). Finally entering the church, they say additional psalms and prayers (nn. 65–66).

Provision is made for a *Missa post confessionem* (nn. 67–70), at the end of which is the imposition of ashes and the cilice (nn. 71–72). At this point the penitent is expelled from the church, in memory of the expulsion of the first parents from the Garden of Eden, with all its tragic consequences and the words of divine condemnation (n. 73).

However, at this point in the history of the liturgy, the imposition of ashes is already a rite in which all Christians may take part, regardless of whether or not they are inscribed in the *ordo penitentium.* In the collection of St. Anastasius's collects there is a blessing and imposition of ashes along with an appropriate procession. Prayers, psalms, responses, and litanies accompany the various stages of the rite. The *statio* was at Santa Sabina (nn. 74–80).

During Lent the penitents did not enter the church but met for their prayers in some other place. The rite of reconciliation took place on Holy Thursday, during the morning synaxis (at the third hour; n. 223). The text was based on the Old Gelasian (*GeV,* I, 352–359).

"Now the penitent leaves the place where he or she has undergone penance, to be brought once again into the bosom of the Church" (n. 224). The *postulatio* of the archdeacon is remarkable for the parallel between baptism and reconciliation, between the first and the second penance. It is always water that washes away sin: in the case of baptism it is the water of the font, and in the case of reconciliation it is the water of tears. The former causes one to be reborn, whereas the second causes one to be reintegrated (nn. 225–227). Penitents are led by the hand of the archdeacon to the bishop who is presiding.

This is a section that is very rich with psalms, responsories, and prayers, which are said or sung while the penitent and the bishop are prostrate on the ground. When they get up, the bishop says a long series of prayers (nn. 224–245). From n. 246 to n. 250 there follows a series of absolutions, of which the first two are in the plural and are said over all the penitents present collectively. The other three are in the singular, that is, they are to be said over a single penitent, to each of whom the bishop turns, naming them as he does so (nn. 249–250). The rite ends with a sprinkling of holy water and an incensation. The bishop exhorts them not to commit again the sin that penance has wiped away (n. 251).

This rite is taken for granted and followed in the Roman pontificals of the Middle Ages, which give it only enough space for a quick summary.

It is Durandus, the bishop of Mende, who makes it the object of an important reworking, in the pontifical that the great canonist and liturgist composed for his own personal use. He placed the reconciliation of penitents on Holy Thursday. It had two parts: the examination of the penitents and rite of reconciliation proper. The former took place at the third hour, after the washing of the feet of "the poor."[38] The latter took place during the great celebration *in cena domini,* at which, along with the reconciliation of penitents, there was also the washing of the feet of the canons,[39] the consecration of the oils and the *mandatum*,[40] and the celebration of the Eucharist.

Durandus also tells us that in some churches the penitents are gathered in front of the church on the previous morning. A Mass was celebrated for them, at the end of which presbyters heard the confessions of the penitents. The examination consisted of a series of questions that were meant to ascertain the penitent's conduct, how he or she behaved as a penitent, how many years have passed in that state, as well as the nature and circumstances of the sin (n. 9). The answers were evaluated by the bishop and the presbyters between the third and sixth hours. They decided collectively whether or not to admit each individual candidate to reconciliation (n. 10).

[38] *Primo lavantur pedes pauperibus; secundo sollemniter penitentes reconciliantur, tertio crisma et olea conficiuntur; quarto fit mandatum* (*PGD,* III, 2,1).

[39] *Quarto loco in hac die pedes lavantur . . . et pontifex incipit lavare pedes canonicis precipue in dignitatibus constitutis* (ibid., n. 98).

[40] This is the commemoration of the handing on of the Great Commandment (John 15:13, 34; 15:12).

The penitents waited until the sixth hour, barefoot and prostrate on the ground. In their hands they held a candle that had been extinguished. They sang litanies. At two different times, two subdeacons, holding lighted candles, faced them from the door of the church. They sang an antiphon, at the end of which they extinguished their candles and withdrew into the church (nn. 13–16). At the *Agnus Dei* the rite was repeated for the third time, but this time it was an elderly deacon who came to them and the candles of the penitents were lit from his (nn. 17–18). The bishop was brought to the middle of the church, where he was seated on his faldstool. The archdeacon turned to him with the allocution *Adest . . . tempus acceptum* (n. 21), which was already found in the Romano-German Pontifical. He was then brought to the door of the church where he addressed to the waiting penitents an exhortation to hope and to conversion (n. 22). They were invited to return to those who would teach them the fear of the Lord. The penitents drew near to their bishop, casting themselves at his feet just beyond the door of the church (nn. 24–25).

An archpriest invited the bishop to reconcile them. The bishop asked if they were considered worthy. When the answer was affirmative, the bishop took one of the penitents by the hand. This person took another by the hand and so on. In this way they filed into the church, led by the bishop, as far as the latter's faldstool. While doing so they sang psalms, antiphons, prayers, and a preface in which the penitents were recommended to the mercy of the One who pardoned Peter and the repentant thief. The merits of his Son would also obtain the consolation of forgiveness for these repentant sinners (nn. 26–31). There were an extraordinary number of psalms, antiphons, and prayers to be used at this point, all taken from the traditions that had been brought together in the Romano-German Pontifical. The penitents were sprinkled with water and incensed. The formula for reconciliation was then said over them: *Indulgentiam et remissionem*. . . . Finally, they were blessed (nn. 42–44).

To a schema that has evidently been taken from the Romano-German Pontifical, Durandus has made some interesting innovations. The ritual of reconciliation of penitents had little future (regardless of having been included in pontificals right up to our own day[41]), but it is nonetheless important in itself and also for its drama and the powerful

[41] See P. M. Gy, "Penitenza," 132.

symbolism of its gestures: the candles that were extinguished and then lit, the repeated prostrations (also of the bishop), the continual changes of locale, each of which has a precise symbolic intention, the clear catechetical element of the penitent's vocation. All these are elements that make this ritual a literary success, but none of them could prevent the rite's definitive and irreparable collapse.

At this point one must ask the question, so simple and yet so very complex at the same time: How could this have happened? The answer is also simple and complex: Because in the meantime another idea, with another conception of punishment and penance, arose and found acceptance. Confession was no longer seen as a means by which the confessor-judge discerned the just punishment; rather, confession itself was the punishment for sin and the correct reparation for guilt.

This will be the area on which the Scholastics would spend their energies and the cultural ground from which would come new pastoral practices and a new theological synthesis.

III. PENANCE IN SCHOLASTICISM AND THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

1. *On the Eve of Scholasticism*

At the dawn of the second millennium, the situation of the sacrament of penance in the Christian West was that which has already been described. It fit well with the principle which, solemnly formulated during the Carolingian era, continued to have the force of long recognized law. For a sin that was notorious and public there should be a corresponding public penance. However, for a sin that was private, an equally private penance would suffice. The intent was to avoid scandal.

Beside these two principal forms, there were others as well, the most spectacular and dramatic of which was certainly the pilgrimage. This was a penance that was hard enough for sins that had been especially serious or for a life that had been entirely given up to moral disorder, violence, or dissolution. To understand why this was so, one need only think of the risks connected to a long voyage (which could well last for months or years), the discomfort and the not infrequent danger.

Less connected to the infliction of punishment, and more nearly oriented toward interior conversion and a prior condition for real forgiveness, there were other forms of penance that were at the time

considered to be perfectly legitimate and sacramental (although they would not in any case be considered "sacramental" today): confession to God, to clerics who were not priests, and to lay people.

Finally, lest it be wrongly forgotten in this historical excursus, one must also remember the formula for general absolution that was inserted into the Mass, where it remained, even if it had a very different sacramental value, until the reforms of Vatican II. This was the *Indulgentiam,* a formula that was understood to have sacramental value.[42] It appeared in the tenth century along with others of the same sort and was probably introduced into the Mass in the eleventh century.

This was "the high tide of sacramental general absolutions" according to Josef A. Jungmann, who notes nonetheless that such absolutions would not have sufficed for serious sins.[43] But there should be no doubt of its sacramental power if those present felt themselves moved to penance and if the priest, while reciting the *Indulgentiam,* held his stole in his hand, just as would have been done in rites that were more strictly sacramental.[44]

That many would have contented themselves with this form is certainly probable. In the first place, the Scholastic synthesis still lay in the future. In the second place, the insistence on the part of preachers and the success of collections of *exempla* show how difficult it was to overcome the tradition of confession "to God alone" or to holy people or to other laypersons. These other practices remain until the triumph of Scholasticism put an end to any alternatives.

Not even entrance into religious life, long considered to be the absolute perfection of penance, was able to withstand the bulldozer strength of the triumphal march of Scholasticism. From now on even the monk and the religious who aspired to perfection, regardless of gender, had to make use—very frequent use at that—of private auricular confession.

2. *The "Absolute" Value of Confession*

It was during this long period that the confession of sins would acquire an "absolute" value, that is to say, it no longer functioned

[42] J. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite,* Christian Classics (Westminster, Md., 1986) 1:305.

[43] Ibid., 306.

[44] There are texts from the period which affirm that the remission of sins came *per stolam;* e.g., a ritual from Arrezzo. Ibid., 57.

merely to inflict punishment. It was valuable in itself. This is not to say that here and there one might not find a remark on the necessity of knowing the sins confessed by the penitent so as to be better able to prescribe a remedy. However, the stress was on the fact that confession itself was the *opus paenitentiae* that was necessary and sufficient to receive forgiveness. The *erubescentia,* that is, the red facial blush produced by the shame of confession, was itself the punishment needed to receive reconciliation. "Confession constitutes the essence of expiation."[45] The punishment that would still need to be assigned at this point could be very modest because the real punishment (confession and the embarrassment that went along with it) had already been met.

Thanks to (or perhaps despite) the insistence of preachers and priests in cathedrals and parishes, the use of confession became general in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Powerful help for this new practice came from the preachers and from the *exempla,* full of tremendous marvels, that they used in order to maximize the effect of their preaching. For example, they told of those who had died without confession and were now in hell. However, because they prayed to one of the saints, they were allowed to return to life again just long enough to go to confession and save their souls.[46]

One asks at this point why the tremendously expiatory power of confession had never been insisted on before. Normally the same answer to this question is given by all: It was the theological reflection of the emerging and eventually triumphant Scholasticism that led the Church to these new practices.

But the history of the liturgical rites shows that it is rarely theological reflection that leads the way for pastoral practice and liturgy. Normally it follows pastoral practice, justifying it and guiding the pastoral effort of the Church. In fact, the new developments had beginnings that lay long in the past. We have already seen that in the tenth century confessors began to reconcile penitents immediately after confession and before they subjected them to *satisfactio*. From this point on it was inevitable. Penitents, once they had been reconciled, did not have to undertake works of penitence with much fervor. How, or where,

[45] Peter the Cantor, *Verbum abbreviatum,* 143: PL 205:342.

[46] See J. Berlioz (assisted by C. Ribacourt), "Image de la Confession," *Pratiques de la confession: Des Péres du désert à Vat. II par le Groupe de la Bussière* (Paris, 1983) 101.

might one find a new set of equivalents, seeing that the old ones now seemed to be too burdensome, too cumbersome?[47] The equivalent was in the act of confession itself, in the shame that it gave rise to, in the visible blushing and embarrassment that it engendered. This was the case because the confessors (as is clear from the texts to which we have given so much attention here, because they provide us with a key to understanding the following developments in the sacrament) and the texts did as much as they could to make as burdensome as possible the sense of humiliation, and even of annihilation, that the penitent was made to experience. To make a good confession, to confess all one's sins, numbering them and giving the circumstances (the Scholastic phrase was "species and number"), to confess frequently, to confess the same sins over and over, possibly to many confessors—these are insisted on over and over again.

Confession is the passport to paradise, and demons work hard to prevent one at the point of death from attaining it. This terror of death without confession will inspire cruelties. In France and England a person who was condemned to death was denied access to confession, so as to kill both his body and his soul. The ghost of the king of Denmark reveals to his son Hamlet that the crime was all the more hateful because he was killed in such a treacherous fashion:

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head

and sent in this lamentable state "to his account."[48] Confession became the sacrament on which the most weight was placed for salvation. It was not so long ago that one could still hear the saying "one hundred confessions, but only one communion." If Joan of Arc only went to confession three or four times a year, it was more than made up for by St. Louis, king of France, who went to confession weekly, and even more often, in the fashion of the Beguines.

[47] In the twelfth century, "the weight of penances was not merely an obstacle for the more tepid among the faithful, but was an obsolete reality which could not meet the aspirations of the more fervent among the faithful." L. Bérious, "Autour de Latran IV [1215]," *Pratiques de la confession,* 99.

[48] Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Act I, Scene 5.

A final step toward the definitive theological synthesis and the resulting canonical legislation was the strong affirmation of the "priestly" nature of the ministry of sacramental confession. From this point on, only the bishop or the presbyter could hear confessions, impose penances, give absolutions and, so, as a result, forgive sins. This power was not without limits, at least on the juridical level, because the number of sins that were reserved, either to the bishop or to the Apostolic See, tended to get ever longer. This does not mean that the sacramental power in itself was limited (in case of the danger of death, any priest could absolve any type of sin, excommunication, or interdict), but that there was a juridical limitation on the exercise of that power.

At this point the great synthesis is complete, and after the famous chapter 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) there would be little to add, either on the level of ritual or of praxis, either by the Scholastics or even by the Council of Trent. The canon prescribes that "every member of the faithful, of whatever sex, must faithfully confess all of one's sins at least once a year, to his or her parish priest, carry out the penance carefully, communicate at least at Easter, if not impeded from doing so for any reason, but with the consent of the parish priest." The penalty for transgression was to be forbidden to enter the Church throughout the rest of one's life and to be denied Christian burial.

The Council showed itself to be very determined on this point in its legislation. It obliged all rectors of churches and of parishes to publish the decrees in the churches frequently, so that no one would remain ignorant of the norms. One was obliged to confess to one's own parish priest (unless for some just cause and with the consent of the parish priest). Otherwise, confessions made to other priests were illicit and null (DS 812).

For his part, the confessor is to inform himself *diligenter* "concerning the circumstances of the sin and the sinner," in order to be well prepared to offer the correct counsel and the best remedy, having recourse to a variety of methods *(diversis experimentis utendo)* to save the one who was "ill" (*ad sanandum aegrotum:* DS 813). And he is especially attentive lest he break the seal of confession (should he do so, he would be deposed from his position and required to spend the rest of his life in a monastery of the most strict observance: DS 814).

The Council of Florence had the Armenians accept a decree on sacramental faith and practice, in which, as regards penance, the

Scholastic synthesis was ratified and so became the official teaching of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church: the acts of the penitent (contrition, oral confession, *satisfactio*—prayer, fasting, and almsgiving) are the *quasi materia* of the sacrament, and the words *Ego te absolvo* are its form. The minister of the sacrament is the *sacerdos* who possesses the appropriate faculties *(habens auctoritatem absolvendi vel ordinariam vel ex commissione superioris)*. The effect of the sacrament is the absolution of sins (DS 1323).

The Council of Trent would only reinforce and sharpen the pastoral line taken here. In the meantime the general confession at the beginning of the Mass, confession to God and to lay people, pilgrimages, and canonical penance all disappeared entirely. The anti-Protestant polemic would extinguish the final glimmers of change and development.

3. *The Tridentine Ritual*

When one speaks of the Tridentine ritual, one speaks of that ritual that was still in force until the end of the 1960s.

Of all the sacramental celebrations, this has been the most private, even if there have been exhortations, especially in recent decades, to leave behind the purely private nature of the celebration. The introduction of a place for confession that is closed off and separated from the rest of the assembly, and the use of a grill between the confessor and penitent (which dates from 1614), have imposed both a style of celebration on the sacrament as well as an understanding of what it means.[49]

By the mere fact of multiplying confessions, there was decreed at the same time the decay of the forms of common prayer with which the ancient rituals established a real solidarity of faith between the minister and the faithful.

The long sessions, the detailed examinations, the psalms recited together, the lengthy admonitions all gave way to a short greeting; an accusation of sins, all of which are neatly defined; a more or less short series of questions; an exhortation of a spiritual or moralizing nature, the length of which depended more on the character of the confessor and the penitent than on the ritual itself. Common prayer gave way to spiritual direction, in the best case, and also to a sort of spiritual haggling between a tough confessor and a penitent who might be

[49] A. Duval, "Le concile de Trente et la confession," *MD* 118 (1974) 131–180; H. Jedin, "La necessité de la confession privée selon le concile de Trente," *MD* 164 (1970) 89–115.

leery of taking on too much by way of renunciation but nonetheless wanted to make a sincere effort at confession.

There was also a certain "bookkeeper's" understanding of the precept that one must confess mortal sins before receiving communion: confessions that one might label "minimal" multiplied. That is, there came to be confessions that allowed one to say that the letter of the precept had been obeyed, but nothing of real sin had been said. There were purely formal confessions, without shame, without any real purpose of amendment.

The celebration was always bilingual. The initial dialogue was always in the local vernacular. The formula of absolution was in Latin. This was the same as was found in the *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam* in the penitential rite of the Mass of Pius V. However, all sacramental value was concentrated in the declarative formula: *Dominus noster Jesus Christus te absolvat . . . ego te absolvo*.

The formula is noteworthy because the words that constitute the sacramental *forma (ego te absolvo)* were repeated twice. The first time was when the confessor said that by the authority of Christ, he absolved the penitent of all censures, excommunications (suspensions if he was a cleric), and interdicts. But the confessor's authority was not absolute. Some of these censures exceeded his authority and were reserved to the Holy See. So he added, "insofar as it is in my power and according to your need."

While saying these words, the hand of the confessor was raised in a gesture of imposition. At the definitive words "and therefore I absolve you of all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,"[50] the confessor made the sign of the cross and the penitent blessed himself or herself. If the confessor was a bishop, he made three signs of the cross.

At this point the penitent was ordinarily asked to recite an act of contrition (since the penitent would likely not be able to follow the Latin formula). Finally, the merits of the passion of Christ and the merits of Mary and of all the saints were invoked upon the penitent with the hope that the good that he or she had done and the evil that he or she had avoided might aid the penitent in achieving eternal life. The confessor also imposed a penance, normally a few short prayers

[50] In case of the danger of death, the rest was omitted and just these final words were said.

that the reconciled penitent could recite right outside the confessional. This ritual remained substantially unchanged until the Second Vatican Council.[51]

IV. THE *ORDO PAENITENTIAE* OF VATICAN II

By promulgating a new *Ordo Paenitentiae* in 1974, one of the most anticipated, difficult, and controversial of the new liturgical documents, Vatican II has reintroduced into the Latin Church a variety of forms and rites for the reconciliation of penitents.[52]

There are three *ordines,* or rites, the titles of which show how they are intended to be used. A rapid survey follows.

1. *The Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents*

This is the equivalent of traditional private confession. The most important novelty, but probably the one that is least used in practice, is the invitation to proclaim the Word of God. This reading might also be done by the penitent, who may also do it during the confession proper or during the preceding examination of conscience.

There follows the confession of sins, the confessor's admonition, the imposition and acceptance of the penance.

The penitent is invited to show sorrow and contrition by reciting one of nine formulas, of which the act of contrition is certainly the best known and most widely used.

The confessor absolves the penitent with a declarative formula, divided into two parts: the first is formally an anamnesis, while the second repeats exactly the concluding section of the ancient formula of absolution: "I absolve you of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The confessor says these words, makes the sign of the cross, and the penitent blesses himself or herself. The rite ends with a thanksgiving, for which there are five options, after which the penitent is dismissed with a wish for peace.

The framework, with the exception of the novelty of the proclamation of the Word of God, is simply a renewal of the rite of confession that the Scholastics worked out; it has been sanctioned by councils since the Fourth Lateran and used almost without interruption for the last four centuries.

[51] *Rituale Romano,* Tit. IV, Cap. II, 1-5. Promulgated by Pius XII (Rome, 1952).

[52] *La penitenze: Studi teologici e pastorali. Il nuovo rito della riconciliazione* (Turin, 1976); P. Visentin, "Penitenza," *NDL* 1061–1082.

2. *The Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*

This is certainly a novelty in the otherwise unchanging landscape of development of penitential practices in recent centuries. What is original about it is the communal preparation for the confession, which remains, for its part, rigorously personal and private.

The first part of the rite is a real Liturgy of the Word, with a greeting, presidential prayer, and proclamation of the Word of God. There may be one or more than one reading. If there is only one, the preference is that it be taken from the Gospels. After a homily there follows an examination of conscience. This last may be done either in silence or it may be guided.

A formula for a general confession, for example, the *Confiteor,* follows. There is then a litany, modeled on the universal intercessory prayers of the Mass, which seeks pardon for sins, conversion of those present and of all the people of God. The Our Father is then said (it may not be omitted), and there follows another presidential prayer. This concludes the first part of the celebration.

At this point the confessors go to the places that have been assigned to them, where they welcome penitents and hear confessions privately. The rite, during this part, is exactly like the rite for individual reconciliation. Sins are confessed, an exhortation is given, a penance is imposed, and absolution is given. The form for absolution is the same as in the first rite. However, the act of contrition is moved (if the *Confiteor* or some equivalent is to be recited communally) as well as the thanksgiving and the departure of the penitent, as long as some collective act that substitutes for them takes place at the end of the celebration.

At this point the presider, surrounded by the other confessors, invites the faithful who have been reconciled to raise a song of praise and thanks to God with a hymn or some appropriate psalm. He exhorts them to carry on with their conversion, says a final prayer of praise (choosing among the seven offered), and concludes the whole service with a benediction and dismissal.

3. *The Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution*

This is the biggest novelty in the reforms of Vatican II. It was much awaited, much opposed, and not well received in all places. Indeed,

not all episcopal conferences have adopted it or consented to its use.[53]

From the point of view of ritual, it does not differ from the preceding ritual, except for its conclusion.

All proceeds as described above up to the moment when the faithful are to approach the confessors. In this rite, instead, they are invited to kneel and to recite a general formula of confession (*I confess to Almighty God,* or something similar; no. 61).

The act of kneeling is of particular importance in this rite. It takes on, by the explicit declaration of the presider, the value of a very particular declaration: the desire to receive the sacrament of reconciliation in the form and according to the conditions prescribed by this rite.

The absolution, the formula of which is common to all three rites, is preceded by a triple invocation, according to a Trinitarian framework, in which the principal moments of the divine plan for salvation are recalled (no. 62). The Father, who desires that the sinner be converted and live, has sent his Son to save the world. The Son, who died and rose for our justification, has poured out the Spirit on the Apostles so that they might have the power to remit sins. By the ministry of his Church (and by the power of the sacrament) he now frees his faithful from evil and pours out the Spirit anew. This Spirit is the same as has been poured out for the forgiveness of sins and for reconciliation with the Father, illumines the hearts of the faithful, and makes them fitting witnesses of the great works of the Lord.

After these three invocations (theologically dense and linguistically too complex) comes the formula of absolution. In the other rites it shows its richness, but here it seems almost superfluous. In reality, the ideas contained in its first part are exactly the same as those that have been said already with even greater amplitude. Its theology, even its words, traces the divine plan: the Father's desire for universal salvation, the way in which that came to pass through the obedience of the Son, the resurrection as pledge of what has been promised, the outpouring of the Spirit together with the fruit of reconciliation, the freedom from darkness and death for those who believe in the Word of Christ, the kingdom of light and of life for those who allow themselves to receive the grace of forgiveness.

[53] See Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *"Normae pastorales Sacramentum Paenitentiae," AAS* 64 (1972) 510–514.

4. *The Pastoral Problem*

Leaving aside for the time being the evaluation of the success of this attempt from the liturgical point of view (although it seems remarkable), what perplexes both the liturgist and pastor is the strange situation that has been created since the promulgation of the new *Ordo Paenitentiae.* The Church seems to have no faith in its own reform and acts defensively to place limitations on the new penitential discipline.

Part of this is certainly the fear that the practice of auricular confession will erode in a catastrophic fashion. This is coupled with the fear that one will lose the contact with the consciences of the faithful which is found in the dialogue of confession and which is its principal benefit.

But at the same time, while there is an understandable and even necessary defense of traditional forms, there seems also to be a closure to a new breath of the Spirit in his Church, which is responding to new needs, to new demands and expectations of the people of today. The answers of the past no longer seem adequate.

It is normal enough—one might even call it a law of liturgical development—that there be a certain initial resistance to the appearance of a new rite. Old habits, comfortable patterns of behavior, and the values that inform them do not easily give way to new ideas, which seem to have more disadvantages than advantages. What happened in the sixth century, and then again in the tenth and eleventh centuries, is being repeated again today. Confronted with disaffection from confession, there is the temptation to deny alternatives.

The Church today, by a great gift of the Spirit of Jesus, has once again, after centuries, a range of pastoral possibilities, by the grace of which people may be led to the sacrament of reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins. What is important is not to try to figure out which of the three is the best, but rather how to use them best to exploit their pastoral power. The real pastor is the one who knows each of his sheep and what they need. In one house the same meal will not suffice for all tastes. One must be aware of the objective and subjective needs of each of one's guests in order to do what is best for them. One does not serve the same meal to the diabetic and the hyperglycemic.

Today the Church has given three means to its ministers, three ways by which sins may be forgiven. The good pastor of souls must know the means that the Church puts at his disposal both to feed souls and to heal them. He must know how to choose, each time, what is, in the

concrete circumstances and according to the conscience of each individual, the best means to bring that person to God, what will be the best means for God to meet that person more intimately.

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C. Care and Anointing of the Sick

Stefano Parenti

7

Anointing of the Sick During the First Four Centuries

The teaching reflected in the euchological tradition of the Christian churches identifies a series of classic New Testament texts regarded as foundational for the anointing and pastoral care of sick members of the Christian community. Healing is one of the signs that accompanies the preaching and mission not only of Christ but also, by his command, that of the disciples (see Mark 6:7, 12-13; 16:15-18). In the Pauline image of the Church as a body (1 Cor 12:12), the sickness or health of one of its members is immediately seen from two aspects: physical and/or spiritual. It is no accident that the famous text from the Letter of James (5:13-16), after describing its "rite of healing" (prayer in faith and anointing in the name of the Lord), adds: "If they [the sick] have committed any sins, they will be forgiven."

Past exegesis raised many questions about this "rite." The Counter-Reformation was concerned with two things: reaffirmation of the sacramentality of the anointing and defense of the late Scholastic view that had made it the sacrament of the dying. In light of the constant tradition of the East and renewed practice in the West, it no longer makes sense today to raise such questions with regard to the text of James.[1]

A lamina from the late first century (and thus from the same time when the Letter of James was written) was discovered in 1963, on which is described a rite of anointing of the sick. It consists of a deprecatory prayer "in the Name" and anointing with a bunch of hyssop

[1] We are referring to the question of the gravity of the sickness and the meaning to be attributed to the "presbyters" who are called to the bed of the sick person.

accompanied by the sign of the cross.[2] The first explicit echo of the epistle is found in Origen but in a strictly penitential context. Penance is one of the seven ways for obtaining the forgiveness of sins offered in the New Covenant. Origen does not mention prayer for the sick person, but the imposition of hands as a sign of forgiveness. Thus it is not clear whether he is referring to reconciliation or to the rite of anointing.[3] A text of John Chrysostom, which appeals to James 5:14 when recalling that it is the priest who forgives sins, poses the same question raised by Origen.[4] In general, we see that the Fathers pay no special attention to the passage from Mark or to the Letter of James. To the healings performed by the disciples they attribute a charismatic value.[5]

The charismatic aspect of healing, often exorcistic in nature and done through anointing, is found in the hagiographic literature, for example in Rufinus.[6] In general, it is done by monks and ascetics, less often by presbyters and bishops. Some of the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus* (late third century) deal with this subject. They describe the bishop's visit to the sick person, which is considered important because it relieves the person's malady, especially when the bishop "prays over him," no doubt for healing, as can be gathered from the reference to Acts 5:15. The physical care of the sick person, on the other hand, is entrusted to an "economos."[7] Canon 13 of the First Council of Nicea (325), while it speaks of taking viaticum to the dying, says nothing about the possibility of anointing them.[8] In his *Exposition on the Grape,* Aphraates, an early fourth-century Oriental writer, enumerates the sacramental uses of oil, which "perfects those who are

[2] E. Testa, *L'huile de la foi: L'onction des malades sur une lamelle du 1er siècle* (Jerusalem, 1967); S. Luff, "The Sacrament of the Sick: A First Century Text," *The Clergy Review* 52 (1967) 50–60.

[3] M. Borret, ed., *Homélies sur le Lévitique,* SCh 286 (Paris, 1981) 1:108.

[4] A.M. Malingrey, ed., *Sur le sacerdoce (Dialogue et Homélie),* SCh 272 (Paris, 1980) 154.

[5] For example, Hilary of Poitiers; see J. Doignon, ed., *Sur Matthieu,* SCh 254 (Paris, 1978) 1:218–220.

[6] *Prologus in libros Historiarum Eusebii,* 2, 4: PL 21:511–512; *Vita di Pacomio,* Acta Sanctorum 16:308.

[7] Canons 25 and 26 in R. G. Coquin, ed., *Les canons d'Hippolyte,* PatOr 31/2 (Paris, 1966) 391–392.

[8] *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta,* J. Alberigo, J. A. Dossetti, and others, eds., 3rd ed. (Bologna, 1973) 12.

anointed (priests, kings and prophets), anoints the sick, and in a hidden and mysterious way brings back those who repent."[9] Thus the baptismal anointing and the anointing of the sick are placed on the same level, or at least envision the use of the same oil. We see this situation faithfully reflected in the euchological collections.

A Coptic fragment of the *Didache* (50/70), which is missing in the Greek, contains a blessing of oil at the end of the anaphora, but this must have been meant for Christian initiation.[10] The formula would later be borrowed verbatim by the *Apostolic Constitutions* (VII, 27) for the blessing of the μύρον.

The *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (ca. 170–235) must be considered the oldest euchological witness to the blessing of oil intended *also* for the sick. The formula follows the Eucharistic Prayer and is said by the bishop: "Lord, just as by sanctifying this oil, with which you anointed kings, priests, and prophets, you give *health* to *those who are anointed with it* and receive it, so let it bring comfort to those who taste of it and health to those who use it."

The Ethiopian version contains two rather interesting variants: "holiness" instead of "health," and "those who use it" instead of "those who are anointed with it."[11] The second variant, at least, is easily explained as a simple case of homophony. Once again the question of whom the prayer is intended for arises. Is it the catechumens or is it sick Christians? Or both? E. Lanne, who has devoted more than one study to the prayer, recalls that the concrete sacramental use of oil is, in the final analysis, a secondary question. It should be emphasized that the oil is the object of a consecration[12] deliberately modeled on the anaphora. Viewed in this way, the question of minister also becomes secondary.

We move next to the *Papyrus of Barcelona,* which, according to its editor, probably dates from the fourth century. The papyrus, he says,

[9] M. J. Pierre, ed., *Aphraate le Sage Persan: Les Exposés,* SCh 359 (Paris, 1989) 2:880–881.

[10] L. Th. Lefort, *Les Pères Apostoliques en copte,* CSCO 136, Scriptores Coptici 18 (Louvain, 1952) 26; see W. Rordorf, ed., *La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didache),* SCh 248 (Paris, 1978) 182–183.

[11] B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique de saint Hippolyte: Essai de reconstitution,* LQF 39 (Münster, 1963) 18.

[12] E. Lanne, "La bénédiction de l'huile," *Les bénédictions et les sacramentaux dans la liturgie,* BELS 44 (Rome, 1988) 165–170.

contains two texts that refer to the sick: a prayer of imposition of hands (χειροθεσία) and an exorcism over the oil. The first text, which uses many biblical citations, prays that the "spirit of illness" may depart from the sick person so that he or she might continue to glorify God in his or her life. The second formula for exorcism of the oil of the sick (?) (καθημένων) actually seems meant for the anointing of the catechumens. The petitions are general, and much of the text repeats a profession of faith formula.[13]

Also from the fourth century is the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a work in Greek (ca. 380) written by a Syrian who lived near Antioch. The "euchologion" of Book VIII gives text and instructions for a blessing of water and oil expressly reserved to the bishop; presbyters may recite it only in the bishop's absence. The prayer asks that the oil and water may be "efficacious in producing health, driving out sickness, putting demons to flight, protecting homes, and foiling ambushes."[14] In addition to the therapeutic aspect, the exorcistic aspect is also evident here.[15]

Again from the fourth century is the so-called *Euchologion of Serapion*, attributed to the eponymous author who was bishop of Thmuis in Upper Egypt between 339 and 362. The book contains three prayers that refer to the oil or pastoral care of the sick, always in a prayer context. There is a strong emphasis on the apotropaic and exorcistic sense (prayers 22 and 30) and on the relationship with other natural elements such as bread and water (prayer 17, which specifically mentions the forgiveness of sins as one of the effects of anointing).[16]

On the basis of all these witnesses we can state certain facts:

[13] R. Roca-Puig, *Anàfora de Barcelona i oltras pregàrias (Missa del segle IV)* (Barcelona, 1994) 99 and 104. The commentary repeats what the author had already published in individual studies: R. Roca-Puig, *La imposició de las mans sobre els malalts. P. Barc. inv. 155b, lin.* 19-26 *i* 156*a, lin.* 1-5. *Colofó P. Barc. inv.* 156*b* (Barcelona, 1989); idem, *Exorcisme de l'Oli dels Malalts. P. Barc. inv. num.* 156*a*, 6-25*;* 156*b, lin.* 1-5 (Barcelona, 1991).

[14] M. Metzger, ed., *Les Constitutions Apostoliques,* vol. 3: *Livres VII et VIII,* SCh 336 (Paris, 1987) 232–233.

[15] M. Metzger, "Les bénédictions des personnes et des éléments dans les «Constitutions Apostoliques»," in *Les bénédictions et les sacramentaux,* 217–218.

[16] M. E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis,* OCA 249 (Rome, 1995) 66–67, 73–74, 80–81 (texts); 143–147, 179–183 (commentary).

a) The existence, since the third and fourth century, of *prayers* of thanksgiving/blessing over the oil of the sick leads, even if not explicitly, to the *prayer* of anointing mentioned in the Letter of James.

b) The distinction between charismatic anointing and that which is called sacramental today is not clearly spelled out. But there is an apt parallel in the history of confession in the East, where it was often administered by monks, that is, by charismatics, even if they were not necessarily ordained presbyters.

c) One and the same oil is apparently used for the catechumens and the sick because of the strong exorcistic connotations in both cases.

d) The sources attribute little importance to the minister of anointing; its effects depend on the oil itself over which the bishop or presbyter has given thanks, just as is still the case today for Eucharistic communion.

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Stefano Parenti

8

Care and Anointing of the Sick in the East

In the liturgical traditions of the Christian East, the ordinary context in which the Church expresses its pastoral concern for its sick members is primarily the Eucharist. Almost every Oriental *oratio fidelium* and anaphora, both past and present, contain a special and fixed prayer intention and *memento* for the sick.[1] Besides such concern, which might be called "ordinary," each Church today has a sacramental celebration of anointing, generally very long and developed. It is called the rite "of the lamp oil," or "of the holy oil," or "of the oil and prayer" (εὐχέλλαιον) or again, "of the seven presbyters" (ἑπταπαπάδες) with explicit references to the terminology used in the Letter of James.[2]

Despite a number of contributions, including some valuable ones, especially in the past, a history of the anointing of the sick in the different Eastern Churches has yet to be written. The reason is a lack of access to the manuscript sources, which are largely unedited. While we will try to supply for this lack, we will spend most of our time on the Byzantine tradition, which is the most known and the most widespread. But we will also refer to the other traditions, especially those that have more or less directly influenced the modern Byzantine ritual. At the same time, we should note that in the Assyrian and Armenian Apostolic Churches the anointing of the sick has fallen into disuse.

1. *Early Period (Fourth to Sixth Century)*

This period is characterized by the presence in several Middle Eastern ecclesiastical *ordines* of formulas for the imposition of hands on the

[1] The Alexandrine tradition in particular: G. J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St. Mark edited from the manuscripts with a commentary,* OCA 234 (Rome, 1990) 23–24.

[2] . . . προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους . . . καὶ προσευξάσθωσαν . . . ἀλείψαντες ἐλαίῳ . . . καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα . . . (Jas 5:13-15).

sick and for the blessing and/or exorcism of oil as a means of physical and spiritual healing. Among these should be mentioned the fourth-century papyrus of Barcelona, recently published by Roca-Puig,[3] the *Apostolic Constitutions* (VIII, 29), a work in Greek (ca. 380) written by a Syrian who lived near Antioch,[4] the *Euchologion of Serapion,* attributed to the eponymous bishop of Thmuis in Upper Egypt between 339 and 362,[5] and the *Testamentum Domini,* translated into Syriac in 687 from a now lost fifth-century Greek original, known and cited by Severus of Antioch (512–518).[6] On the other hand, the Armenian *Scholium* to a Greek commentary on the Letter of James, which goes back to the same period, may be regarded as the first detailed theological explanation of the rite of anointing of the sick.[7]

2. *Medieval Rites (Eighth to Twelfth Century)*

At the end of the patristic period the first manuscript of the Byzantine euchologion *Barberini gr.* 336 (8th cent.) gives three prayers for the sick, two prayers over the oil for the anointing, one "for a sick ascetic" and, at the end of the codex, a diaconal litany of supplication.[8] In other words, there is no rite in the strict sense but only a series of prayers, more or less as in the early Western sources. Nothing is said about the time or place where or by whom the prayers are said, and there is nothing about the recipient's concrete condition. The same editorial situation is found in the tenth- and eleventh/twelfth-century sources from the Oriental provinces.[9]

[3] R. Roca-Puig, *Anàfora de Barcelona i oltras pregàrias (Missa del segle IV),* Barcelona, 1994, 99 and 104. The commentary repeats what the author had already published in individual studies: R. Roca-Puig, *La imposició de les mans sobre els malalts. P. Barc. inv* 155*b, lin.* 19-26 *i* 156*a, lin.* 1-5. *Colofó P. Barc. inv.* 156*b,* Barcelona, 1989; idem., *Exorcisme de l'Oli dels Malalts. P. Barc. inv. num.* 156*a,* 6-25*;* 156*b, lin.* 1-5*,* Barcelona, 1991.

[4] M. Metzger, ed., *Les Constitutions Apostoliques.* Vol. 3: *Livres VII et VIII.* Introduction, texte critique et notes, SCh 336 (1987) 232.

[5] F. X. Funk, ed., *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum,* 2 (Paderborn, 1905) nos. 17 and 29.

[6] I. E. Rahmani, ed., *Testamentum Domini nostri Iesu Christi* (Mainz, 1899) 48–49.

[7] E. J. Kilmartin, "The Interpretation of James 5:14-15 in the Armenian Catena on the Catholic Epistles Scholium 82," OCP 53 (1987) 335–364.

[8] *BAR,* nos. 196–200, 271 and 288.

[9] See, for example, the euchologia *Sinai gr.* 957 (A.Dmitr, 2, 5–6), 958 (ibid., 35), 959 (ibid., 45, 49, 56–57, 58–59), 961 (ibid., 66, 71, 74).

The prayers ask indiscriminately for "the healing of body and soul" so that the sick person might soon be reunited to the Church (which is to be understood as a concrete place-assembly) in order to praise the name of the Lord once again. The anointing does not presuppose the sick person's previous reconciliation but rather obtains it, seeing that sin—even grave sin—is part of the spiritual sicknesses that must be treated.

The presence of the diaconal litany of supplication in an appendix to the *Barberini* euchologion shows that the anointing of the sick undoubtedly consisted of a true and proper *rite.* Another Byzantine euchologion from Italy, the *St. Petersburg GPB, Porfirij gr.* 226 (10th cent.), contains the first allusion to its development.

Prayer for the oil of the sick: Lord, in your goodness and mercy you heal the sufferings of our souls and our bodies. Master, do you yourself sanctify this oil that it may obtain healing for those anointed with it; let it do away with all suffering caused by physical illness, every defilement of soul and body, and every evil. Thus may your name be glorified. . . .[10]

Focusing on essentials, the rubrics in the Petersburg codex highlight the distinctive features of the anointing of the sick in early Byzantine tradition: (1) the oil is *always* blessed by a presbyter during the celebration; (2) the presbyters (plural) of the Letter of James (5:14-16) are concretely expressed by the number of presbyters, seven, a sign of fullness; (3) the rite follows the Divine Liturgy. The same manuscript provides seven different prayers, which are to be understood as formulas of anointing. One of these is for a sick presbyter.[11]

The concrete development of the rite is further shown in a group of unedited manuscripts that are a little later than the Petersburg euchologion and also from Byzantine Italy.[12] The blessing of the "holy oil

[10] Unedited, ff. 121^{v}–122^{r}. *N.B.:* Seven priests celebrate the rite of holy oil. The lamp is filled with the holy oil, and each presbyter lights a taper before reciting the prayer and litany of supplication for the sick person. After the Eucharistic Liturgy the sick person is anointed.

[11] A. Jacob, *L'euchologe de Porphyre Uspenski. Cod. Leningr. gr.* 226 *(X^{e} siècle). Le Muséon* 78 (1965) nos. 207–213; the second, third, fourth, and fifth formulas correspond to *BAR* 271, 196–198.

[12] Coming from the milieu of Calabria and Campania are *Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV* and *X* ff. 107^{r}–111^{v} from the tenth and tenth/eleventh century, and *Erlangen A*2 (formerly 96) from 1205, ff. 21^{v}–22^{v}, lacuna, 23$^{r—v}$.

for the sick" by seven presbyters can take place either in the evening or at the beginning of monastic ὄρθρος (Matins). A double litany introduces the prayer for the blessing of the lamp oil, which is recited by each presbyter, who lights his taper and leaves it to burn throughout the night or for the duration of Matins.

Next come the proper parts of the Liturgy of the Word for the Eucharistic celebration (Ps 40:5b; Jas 5:13-20; Ps 37:2; John 4:46-54), at the end of which each presbyter recites the prayer for the oil again, takes his taper from the lamp and extinguishes it. At this point the person to be anointed comes forward and is anointed in the form of a cross on the forehead, ears, and hands by the presbyters, "who pray." In conclusion, a presbyter or deacon anoints the entire body.

For the blessing of the oil the rite provides three prayers from which to choose.[13] The first is the classic Byzantine formula "Lord, in your goodness. . . ." The second, usually retained in the Italo-Greek euchologia, is also found in the Armenian tradition, a sign of a common Oriental ancestor.[14] The third formula, which is very interesting, deserves to be given in translation:

Send, O Lord, your abundant mercy on this fruit of the olive through which you have anointed priests, prophets, kings and martyrs and clothed them with your goodness. May it be for all who are anointed with it or drink it for the good and well-being of their soul, body and spirit, to drive away all evil, for the health of those who are anointed. Through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, with whom you are blessed together with your most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit.

As E. Lanne has shown more than once,[15] the formula is rooted in the *Traditio Apostolica* of Hippolytus (3rd cent.).[16] It is also found in the

[13] Parenti, *Γ.β. IV.*

[14] For example, J. Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum* (Venice, 1730; reprint Graz, 1960) 347, from *Barberini gr.* 329 (12th cent.); for the Armenian Rite, H. Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium Coptorum, Syrorum et Armenorum in administrandis sacramentis* (Würzburg, 1864) 2:522.

[15] E. Lanne, "L'onction des martyrs et la bénédiction de l'huile, *Irén* 31 (1958) 138–155; idem, *La bénédiction de l'huile,* in *La maladie et la mort du chrétien dans la Liturgie,* BELS 1 (Rome, 1975) 165–180.

[16] B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique de saint Hippolyte: Essai de reconstitution,* LQF 39 (Münster, 1963) 28, rr. 14 and ff.

West in the Gelasian and Gregorian sacramentaries[17] and in the so-called Coptic euchologion of the White Monastery.[18]

Contemporary practice in Constantinople was not much different, as attested in *Paris Coislin* 213 (1027), which fixes the "aristocratic" tradition of the rite as it was celebrated in the domestic chapel.[19] After the blessing of the oil and the lighting of the tapers by the seven celebrants, the Eucharistic Liturgy takes place (Ps 40:5b; Jas 5:13-20; Ps 24:16; Mark 6:7-13; Ps 115:4), at the end of which they anoint (also on the breast) not only the sick person but also all those present and the dwelling itself. At the end of the rite Luke 19:1-10 is read, followed by a litany of supplication and the dismissal. The celebration is repeated for the next seven days.

Although the rites presented in the twelfth-century Byzantine euchologia differ from one another, one thing they all have in common is a vigil office that precedes the celebration of the sacrament, which in some cases can even last all night.[20] More often it assumes the form of a partial vigil with the singing of a canon,[21] always ending with the Eucharistic Liturgy. There are many possibilities for celebrating the vigil part of the service. Their structure reflects the contemporary superposition of the monastic Liturgy of the Hours on the cathedral Office as well as Middle Eastern influences on the Constantinople tradition.[22]

3. *Origins of the* Textus Receptus *and Its Establishment (Thirteenth to Sixteenth Century)*

During the thirteenth century there appears in the *Oriental* copies of the Byzantine euchologion a new type of celebration. Added to the

[17] L. C. Mohlberg, *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli (Cod. Vat. Reg. lat.* 316, *Paris Bibl. Nat.* 7193, 41/56. *Sacramentarium gelasianum)* (Rome, 1960) 61, no. 382.

[18] E. Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe du Monastère Blanc: Texte copte avec traduction française,* PatOr 28, 2 (Paris, 1958).

[19] Text in A.Dmitr, 2:104.

[20] For example, in *Vatican gr.* 1554 (early 12th cent.), ff. 134^{v}–136^{r}; see also *Vatican gr.* 1811 *(1147),* ff. 68–71 (the end is mutilated).

[21] J. Mateos, "A la recherche de l'auteur du canon de l'Euchélaion," *OCP* 22 (1956) 361–383. *Ordo Romanus* V, Vespers and Matins for seven days with formulas for the sick person.

[22] For example, *Sinai gr.* 973, Palestine, 1152/53 (ed. A.Dmitr, 2:101–109), and *Barberini gr.* 431, southern Italy, 12th cent., ff. 72^{v}–80^{r}, and the contemporary *Barberini gr.* 329, also Italo-Greek (ed. Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum,* 346–348).

vigil is the sevenfold repetition of a liturgical unit that includes two New Testament readings and a presidential prayer, for a total of seven epistles, seven gospels, and seven orations.[23] At the same time the Eucharistic celebration disappears, though it leaves regular traces in the structure of the rite.[24] At the time of the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354) this was also the rite used in Constantinople.[25]

In the thirteenth/fourteenth century, in the context of the liturgical reform following the restoration of Byzantine church structures after the period of the Latin empire (1204–1261), the division between the vigil and the celebration of the sacrament becomes increasingly clearer. In fact, the final prayer ends up being the same as the formula for sacramental absolution, a questionable choice, since it frustrates the concept of anointing as a means of forgiveness of sins, which is strongly expressed in the prayers said during the rite.[26] Again in the fourteenth century, the rite is enriched at the end by the imposition of the Gospel book on the head of the sick person. But this gesture, impressive though it is, is obscured by the prayer of absolution that accompanies it, which is preceded by a long protocol in the first person singular stressing once more the need for absolution at the end of the rite (!).[27]

The sevenfold structure *epistle-gospel-prayer,* which in the thirteenth century begins to displace the more sober Constantinople structure in the Middle Eastern provinces of the empire, is also found in the Coptic, Armenian, and Syrian traditions. It goes without saying that this fact is of interest for comparative liturgy.

While all traces of the vigil disappear from the rite in the last witnesses to the Byzantine manuscript tradition, paradoxically the proper hymns are kept, decontextualized from their original structure. In the sixteenth century one of these manuscripts had the honor of being

[23] See *Athos, Lavra of St. Athanasius* 189 (13th cent.), ed. A.Dmitr, 2:184–187.

[24] See *Sinai gr.* 960 (13th cent.), ed. A.Dmitr, 2:197–202.

[25] A.Dmitr, Priloz., 107–118.

[26] See *Athens, National Library* 662, ff. 258–285. This interesting monastic euchologion, which shows a preference for the archaic, sometimes uses sources from the metropolitan tradition. The same rite as that in the Athens manuscript also appears in the contemporary *Sinai gr.* 965 (ed. A.Dmitr, 2:320–324).

[27] The sick person becomes simply "the one who approaches with his faults"; see *Moscow Holy Synod gr.* 280 (ed. A.Dmitr, Priloz., 133–134) and *Sinai gr.* 994 (ed. A.Dmitr, 2:323–325).

printed, and since then, perhaps more through the initiative of the printers than through the intervention of Church authority, it has become *the* rite for the anointing of the sick in the Byzantine Churches.

4. *Contemporary Practice and Attempts at Reform*

The Orthodox Church of Greece prefers to celebrate the εὐχέλαιον in church on Wednesday of Holy Week as a preparation for Easter communion. But it is also celebrated on the vigil of certain feasts (Christmas, the Dormition of the Mother of God, the patronal feast). It is celebrated in the home on the occasion of important or difficult moments in domestic or personal life (marital problems, family conflicts, examinations, etc.). The rite, ideally concelebrated by seven presbyters (more often by two or even one), always involves the anointing of everyone present, a practice that Orthodox theology justifies by appealing to the close relationship between sickness and sin. Influenced by Scholastic theology in the seventeenth century, the Russian Church, although not omitting the extremely popular public celebration on Wednesday of Holy Week, generally reserves anointing to persons who are physically ill, even if the illness is not serious.[28]

With rare exceptions, the practice of the Eastern Catholic Churches is identical to that of the Roman Church before Vatican II. The Armenians and Chaldeans have simply adopted the Tridentine Roman rite, and anointing is regarded and celebrated by all as a sacrament of the dying. This attitude has naturally led to a shortening of the various rites, often without sound liturgical principles and solely in order to have the rite short enough so that death does not occur before the final anointing.[29] This is a paradoxical situation, to say the least, seeing that the new *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum* owes more than a little to the Byzantine and Oriental traditions.

Proposals for reform have also been made in the Orthodox Church of Greece. These are more organic and theologically based than has been the case in the Uniate Churches, especially with regard to whether, based on the example of authentic tradition, it might be a good idea to restore the link between the anointing of the sick and the Eucharistic Liturgy.

[28] See the *Trebnik* [ritual] published in Kiev in 1646.

[29] For an example of this see the IERATIKON published in Rome in 1954 (pp. 155–165) with a rite *in articulo mortis* (pp. 165–166).

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9

The Anointing of the Sick in the West

In order to study the pastoral care of the sick and the sacrament of the anointing, we shall consider first the practice of the Western Church from the fifth century to the middle of the twentieth century (I). Then we shall examine the ritual entitled *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* published in 1973, henceforth abbreviated *PCS* (II). Lastly, we shall conclude with some theological reflections and pastoral applications (III).

I. CARE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK FROM THE FIFTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The sacrament of the anointing of the sick has been experienced in different ways in the course of the centuries. In the study of this sacrament, it is necessary to be familiar with this *locus theologicus*—the ecclesial practice—and to understand the reasons for the modifications brought to the celebration and the use of the anointing. We are distinguishing three periods: from the fifth to the eighth century; from the eighth to the twelfth century; from the twelfth to the twentieth century.

1. *The Anointing with Oil (Fifth to Eighth Century)*

As early as the fifth century, we find that the information is rather abundant: the oil destined for the anointing of the sick is blessed by the bishop, and sometimes by a priest, but the anointing itself can be done by a priest, a family member, or by the sick person himself or herself. In a letter addressed in 416 to Decentius, bishop of Gubbio, Pope Innocent I wrote that it belongs to the bishop to bless the holy oil, but that all Christians, and not only priests, can use it in case of illness to anoint themselves or their relatives.[1] Thereafter, this letter

[1] *Epist*. 25, 8; PL 20:559.

became part of almost all the Western canonical collections until the end of the eighth century.

St. Caesarius, bishop of Arles from 503 to 542, had to forbid the recourse to pagan and magical remedies that many Christians still sought:

As soon as some infirmity overtakes [a person, the] sick should receive the body and blood of Christ, humbly and devoutly ask the presbyters for blessed oil, and anoint his [or her] body with it. Thus will be fulfilled in [the sick] what we read, "Are any among you sick? Let [them] bring in the presbyters, and let them pray over [them], anointing [them] with oil. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise [them] up; and if [they] be in sins, they shall be forgiven [them]. See to it [brothers and sisters], that [people] hasten to the church in infirmity, and [they] will merit to receive both bodily health and the remission of [their] sins.[2]

Caesarius comes back to the same topic in his *Sermon* 52, in which he advises mothers whose children are sick "to anoint them with the oil blessed by the priest."[3] Likewise, in his *Sermon* 184, he strongly recommends that in case of disease, Christians are "devoutly to anoint both themselves and their children with blessed oil, and, in accord with what the Apostle James says, to receive, not only bodily health, but also the forgiveness of sins. For this the Holy Spirit has promised through him."[4]

In these three texts Caesarius speaks of the sick, not of the dying. The anointing has the twofold effect of procuring bodily healing and forgiveness of sins; for Christians, it replaces and surpasses the recourse to magical remedies.

One century later, Eligius († 660), bishop of Noyon (France), repeats almost verbatim Caesarius's instructions:

Whenever some disease befalls you, do not consult the wizards and soothsayers. . . . Let the sick place their trust solely in the divine mercy; let them receive with faith and devotion the Eucharist of the body and blood of Christ; let them faithfully request the holy oil from the Church and anoint their bodies in the name of Christ. And, accord-

[2] *Sermon* 13, 3; St. Caesarius of Arles, *Sermons*, 2 vols., trans. M. M. Mueller. The Fathers of the Church 31, 47 (New York, 1956, 1964) 1:77.

[3] *Sermon* 52, 5; op. cit., 1:202.

[4] *Sermon* 184,5; op. cit, 2:482.

ing to the Apostle, "The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up"; and they will regain not only the health of the body but also that of the soul.[5]

The formula for the blessing of the oil of the sick found in Roman sacramentaries dates from the same period; it is still the one contained, with some modifications, in the *PCS* (no. 140):

Send from heaven, we beseech you, Lord, the Holy Spirit Paraclete upon this olive oil, which you deigned to draw from this vigorous tree for the healing of mind and body. And may your holy blessing give to all who will anoint themselves with it, will taste it, or will apply it to themselves, comfort of body, soul, and spirit.[6]

Bede the Venerable is the last author who mentions that laypersons performed the anointing. Whereas certain people want to reserve the administration of the anointing to priests, he wrote (about 720):

And now the custom of the Church holds that those who are sick be anointed with consecrated oil by the presbyters, with the prayer that goes with this, that they may be cured. Not only for the presbyters, but, as Pope Innocent writes, even for all Christians it is lawful to use the same oil for anointing at their own necessity or that of their [relatives], but the oil may be consecrated only by bishops.[7]

In this first period, the emphasis is placed on the blessing of the oil by the bishop; on the coming of the Holy Spirit, who confers on this oil its life-giving power; on the healing efficacy of the anointing, which reaches both the bodies and minds of the sick. The anointing is used not only for Christians stricken with any illness but also for the infirm or handicapped: the deaf, the blind, the possessed. The anointing is a remedy of a supernatural order. It would be anachronistic to call it a sacrament in the strict sense, since this concept did not yet exist.

2. *The Medieval Turning Point (Eighth to Twelfth Century)*

In the course of the eighth century, we witness a decisive shift in the practice and the theology of the anointing of the sick. Several reasons explain this evolution.

[5] PL 87:529.

[6] *GeV* 382; cf. *GrH* 334.

[7] Bede the Venerable, *The Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles,* trans. D. Hurst (Kalamazoo, 1985) 61–62.

First, the administration of the sacraments was reserved to priests. Different councils held during this period forbade priests to entrust either the holy oil or the viaticum to laypersons. We detect here the determination on the part of Church officials to reserve the management of the sacred exclusively to the priesthood. Second, the anointing of the sick, and especially of the dying, was regarded as a complement of the sacrament of penance. While penance purified the sinners' souls, the anointing purified their bodies, which had participated in the sin. At that time the custom developed to anoint the organs of the senses: the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the ears, the hands and the feet, along with formulas asking for the pardon of all sins committed with these parts of the body. And obviously this sacrament of forgiveness could be conferred only by a priest.

At the same time, people's attention was centered less on the bodily effects of the anointing than on its spiritual effects. Christians no longer expected recovery or even any sort of relief, but they focused on the purification of their whole being in preparation for their appearing before God. The sacrament was no longer given to the sick but only to the dying and was called *sacramentum exeuntium* (sacrament of those departing life).

In that period the fear of death, of the world beyond, of God's judgment, greatly increased. No longer seen in the paschal light, death had become a tragic event. At the moment of leaving this world to begin a frightful journey, and in order to escape the dangers lurking on this dark road, Christians desired to be surrounded by all possible sorts of protection: not only the traditional viaticum but also a last absolution and a final anointing. The Church offered them three sacraments of preparation for death, or rather of accompaniment on the perilous passage from this world to the next.

This new way of seeing the sacrament is found also in the liturgical texts. The sacramentaries of the ninth century contain the sacramental anointing, reserved to the priest, often a laying on of hands, and numerous prayers. To these, monastic rituals add psalms with antiphons, litanies, and hymns. This rather extensive office is celebrated either in the church or in the sickroom.[8]

[8] See the texts in J. Deshusses, *Le sacramentaire grégorien* (Fribourg, 1982) 3:126–154.

The Romano-Germanic Pontifical, dating from the tenth century, has two rituals for the sick. In the first place is an *Ordo ad visitandum et unguendum infirmum* (Order for visiting and anointing the sick), which, despite its title, does not mention any anointing with oil but includes a sprinkling with holy water, the use of incense, numerous psalms and prayers, and lastly the blessing of the sick person.[9] In the second place is an *Ordo ad unguendum infirmum* (Order for anointing the sick), which presupposes the presence of several priests. The rite includes a sprinkling, a prayer, the singing of Psalms 6 and 49, a laying on of hands by the attending priests, the singing of Psalm 119, the anointing performed by all the priests *(perungunt singuli sacerdotes),* a hymn to Christ the physician, finally the communion of the sick person with the body and blood of Christ, and a concluding prayer.[10] We have here a true concelebration of the sacrament.

Most rituals specify on what parts of the body the anointing must be done: on the chest and where the pain is most intense *(in loco ubi dolor imminet amplius);* another tradition indicates the organs of the five senses, which have also been organs of sin and therefore are in need of healing and forgiveness. Given this conception of the anointing of the sick as closely related to penance, it is understandable that its administration was seen as reserved to priests.

3. *The Sacrament of Extreme Unction (Twelfth to Twentieth Century)*
In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a theology of the sacraments in the strict sense took shape. The precise definition of the Christian sacrament made possible the decision to fix the number of sacraments at seven. Extreme unction, the sacrament of the dying, found its place in this systematization. Indeed, it was at that point that the term "extreme unction" appeared. What is the meaning of this name? Is it the sacrament received in the last moment of life, with an effort to delay its reception until the last instant so that Christians may die with their anointing still visible and fresh? Or else is this anointing the last of the sacramental anointings? In this case, it is connected with the anointings of baptism and confirmation, and a striking relation is established between the sacrament at the end of life and the sacraments of

[9] C. Vogel and R. Elze, eds., *Le Pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle,* 3 vols., ST 226, 227, 229 (Vatican City, 1963–1972) 1:246–256.

[10] Ibid., 2:257–270.

initiation. This ultimate anointing would then be the last rite of initiation before entrance into eternal life.

The term "extreme unction" was adopted by great theologians: Peter Lombard about 1150[11] and Thomas Aquinas about 1227.[12] It was also accepted by the Council of Florence in 1439[13] and by the Council of Trent.[14] However, the latter council used both *extrema unctio* and *sacra infirmorum unctio* (holy anointing of the sick). Several theologians and bishops attending the Council of Trent attempted to bar the use of the term *extrema unctio,* which seemed to them to be a *vocabulum novum* ("new term") without support in tradition.

Thomas Aquinas and the theologians of subsequent times developed a theology of extreme unction corresponding to the contemporary practice. It is a sacrament of preparation for death and for entrance into God's glory; it has the twofold effect of healing the spiritual injuries inflicted by sin and preparing Christians to enter God's glory. Bodily cure is not excluded, but it is not taken into consideration. Such a theology remained in force until Vatican II and justified the practice of administering the sacrament at the last moment to a dying, and at times unconscious, patient. Only persons in danger of death could receive the sacrament.

As extreme unction was reserved for the dying, its celebration could not last too long. In the thirteenth century, the *Consuetudines cluniacenses* (Customs of Cluny) made available a shorter ritual: after the sprinkling and the incensing, the priest said a prayer and then anointed the organs of the five senses while the community sang psalms. After the anointing the priest gave communion to the sick person.[15]

This Cluniac ritual spread throughout the whole of Europe and influenced the Pontifical of the Roman Curia written in the thirteenth century.[16] Furthermore, it was the source of the Ritual of Paul V in 1614, which was slightly modified in 1925. In this latest edition, Title V,

[11] *Sentences,* IV, 23.

[12] *Commentary on the Sentences,* IV, 23.

[13] H. Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma,* trans. R. J. Deferrari (St. Louis, 1957) 700.

[14] Ibid., 907–908.

[15] St. Odilo, *Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis,* ed. P. Dinter, nos. 193–194, Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum 10 (Siegburg, 1980) 269–272.

[16] *Le Pontifical romain au moyen-âge,* ed. M. Andrieu, vol. 2: *Le Pontifical de la Curie romaine au XIII^e siècle,* ST 87 (Vatican City, 1939) 486–495.

treating of the sick and dying, comprises eight chapters; the first two directly concern the sacrament: 1. *De sacramento extremae unctionis* (The sacrament of extreme unction) and 2. *Ordo ministrandi sacramentum extremae unctionis* (Order for the administration of the sacrament of extreme unction).

Chapter 1, corresponding to the General Introduction to the *PCS,* states that this sacrament, "salubrious for the soul, but also for the body," must as far as possible be given to patients still fully conscious; but it can only be conferred on Christians who, by reason of sickness or age, are in danger of death. When it cannot be ascertained whether the sick person is really in danger of death, the sacrament is administered conditionally (!). The same thing applies when one doubts that the dying person is still alive. The anointing is done on the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the hands, and, optionally, on the feet. Every anointing is accompanied by the formula *Per istam sanctam unctionem et suam piissimam misericordiam, indulgeat tibi Dominus quidquid per visum* (*per auditum,* and so on) *deliquisti. Amen* ("Through this holy anointing, and because of his most kind mercy, may the Lord grant you pardon for any sin you have committed through sight [through hearing, and so on]. Amen"). It is obvious that the accent is placed on the forgiveness of sins.

Chapter 2, which describes the performance of the rite, begins with the sprinkling of the patient and his or her room with holy water. Then the priest encourages the patient, whose hope of life eternal he strengthens. Three prayers ask for God's blessing and the angels' protection. There follows a vigorous exorcism, together with the laying of the priest's right hand on the patient's head. Then the priest proceeds to anoint the organs of the five senses, and, if desired, the feet. Then he says three prayers, two of which at least request that the patient may regain his or her health. One can only be surprised at such a prayer, since the sacrament is administered to dying persons, more or less conscious, to whom the priest was just speaking of life eternal. There is a manifest divergence between the pastoral care of that time and an older set of prayers. In fact, before leaving the patient, the priest again exhorts him or her *ad moriendum in Domino* ("to die in the Lord"), or else, if death is evident, he says the admirable prayers of the commendation of the soul: *Proficiscere, anima christiana . . .* ("Go forth, Christian soul . . .").

Chapter 4, *De visitatione et cura infirmorum* ("the visitation and care of the sick"), describes the visit that the pastor or another priest or

even a layperson sent by the pastor makes to the patient. The aim of this visit is to comfort the patient, to incite him or her to religious feelings as death nears, but above all to urge him or her to the confession of sins, by evoking, if necessary, the torments of hell. But in this text there is no allusion whatsoever to the sacrament of anointing.

This sort of pastoral care was crying for reform. From 1945 to 1960, liturgical research along with theological study prepared the renewal of this sacrament, which would start at Vatican II and be continued by the publication of a new ritual in 1972, entitled *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum* (Order for the Anointing of the Sick), abbreviated *OUI*.

II. THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK: RITES OF ANOINTING AND VIATICUM

In the Constitution on the Liturgy, Vatican II devotes three paragraphs to the anointing of the sick:

73. "Extreme unction," which may also and more fittingly be called "Anointing of the Sick," is not a sacrament intended only for those who are at the point of death. Hence, it is certain that as soon as any of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, this is already a suitable time for them to receive this sacrament.

74. In addition to the separate rites for anointing of the sick and for Viaticum, a continuous rite must be prepared in which sick people are anointed after they have made their confession and before they receive Viaticum.

75. The number of the anointings should be whatever suits the occasion, and the prayers which belong to the rite of anointing are to be revised so as to correspond to the varying conditions of the sick people who receive the sacrament.[17]

Thus the Council wanted to partially change the name of the sacrament that is not destined only for those at the point of death but to all who are close to death, either because of infirmity or disease or old age. Number 73 deals with the question of the subject of the sacrament and of the significance of the sacrament with regard to different human states: sickness, old age, danger of death.

[17] *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations,* ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (New York, 1996) 141–142.

In number 74 the text concerns the relationship between the three sacraments usually given to the dying: penance, anointing, viaticum. Each of these sacraments has its own value, but they also are complementary, and the council reestablishes their normal succession.

Finally, number 75 provides for flexibility, a possible or necessary adaptation in both the number of anointings and the text of prayers.

This program contained in the Constitution on the Liturgy finds its application in the new *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*.

1. *The Structure of the Ritual*

Before studying the rite itself, it is fitting to see how the *PCS* is structured, for the choice of titles and plan has a pastoral significance. The new ritual emphasizes the properly sacramental elements, the priest's symbolic and meaningful gestures, as well as the essential prayers whose text has been renovated.

The *PCS* does not contain only the sacrament of anointing, but also the whole of the Church's pastoral care with regard to the sick and the dying. After a fine General Introduction, doctrinal and liturgical in character, it is divided into three parts: I. Pastoral Care of the Sick. II. Pastoral Care of the Dying. III. Readings, Responses, and Verses from Sacred Scripture. The first part has four chapters: 1. Visits to the Sick. 2. Visits to a Sick Child. 3. Communion of the Sick. 4. Anointing of the Sick. The second part also has four chapters: 5. Celebration of Viaticum. 6. Commendation of the Dying. 7. Prayers for the Dead. 8. Rites for Exceptional Circumstances. The third part is a vast repertory of biblical readings. There is also an appendix for the Reconciliation of Individual Penitents.

Chapter 1 provides for and describes the priest's visit to the sick, with a liturgical celebration comprising a brief liturgy of the Word, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, a concluding prayer, and a final blessing. The visit to the sick is not primarily a liturgical rite but a human act to which the Gospel gives an infinitely richer significance: "I was sick and you took care of me" (Matt 25:36). Very often the sick feel abandoned and lonely; their illness excludes them from normal life, the active life of other people; they seek the presence of others and communication with them. To visit the sick is a way of helping them to come out of this solitude. Therefore for lay Christians, deacons, and priests, it is a duty to visit the sick and to bring them a presence,

a word, a comforting gesture. Besides, the sick Christians are invited to unite their pain with the passion of Christ.

Chapter 2 is identical in structure to Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 distinguishes the communion of the sick in ordinary circumstances from that given in a hospital or institution, the latter being a shorter rite. After the introductory rites of greeting, sprinkling with holy water, and a penitential rite analogous to that of Mass come the liturgy of the Word, comprising a reading, response, and general intercessions, and the liturgy of Holy Communion, beginning with the Lord's Prayer and ending with silent prayer and a prayer after communion. A final blessing is given. The Johannine theme of presence and abiding recurs often in the readings chosen for the communion of the sick (*PCS*, no. 84).

Chapter 4 describes the rite of anointing and distinguishes between anointing outside Mass, anointing within Mass, and anointing in a hospital or institution. The anointing comprises the same introductory rites as the rite of Holy Communion, with an instruction before the penitential rite; a liturgy of the Word, that is, a reading and response; then the properly sacramental part, the liturgy of anointing. This begins with a litany before the laying on of hands, which is not mentioned in the Letter of St. James but is already found in the ritual of 1614, where it is meant as an exorcism. If several priests are present, each of them lays his hands on the patient's head (no.19), thus participating in a true concelebration.

What is the meaning of this laying on of hands? In general in Christian sacraments, it signifies the coming down of the Holy Spirit. Here it seems that the laying on of hands is meant to answer in a liturgical manner to the patient's need for physical contact and reassuring touch. Many sick or dying persons ask their visitors to take their hand in theirs, with the hope that their weakened frame may find strength and comfort in this bodily contact with a healthy human being. The laying on of hands in this case is a physical contact, and the priest must really place his hands on the head and not be content with extending them above the patient's head.

Then come the prayer over the oil, the anointing with oil on the forehead and the hands, the prayer after anointing, and lastly the Lord's Prayer. The formulas offered for the blessing of the oil are explicitly Trinitarian. God the Father sent the Son to heal our infirmities and now is sending the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our weakness and

restores our strength. The blessing of the oil is at once anamnesis and epiclesis: memory of Christ, the healer, and appeal to the Spirit, the comforter.

With this blessed oil the priest anoints the forehead and the hands (no. 124). These places for anointing were chosen for convenience in practice, but they also attest the spontaneous symbolism of the forehead as the seat of intelligence and will, and of the hands as organs of expression and action. In the General Introduction (no. 23), it is foreseen that, especially in case of accident, the anointing can be done on another part of the body. It is also foreseen in no. 24 that the episcopal conferences can modify the number and place of the anointings according to traditions and cultures.

The anointing is accompanied by an entirely new formula:

Through this holy anointing
may the Lord in his love and mercy help you
with the grace of the Holy Spirit. R. Amen.
May the Lord who frees you from sin
save you and raise you up. R. Amen.

Not only does this formula explicitly mention the Holy Spirit, but it repeats exactly James's text with the verbs "to save" (σώζειν in Greek) and "to raise up" (ἔγειρειν in Greek). This formula is multipurpose and applies either to an old person or the sick or the dying.

Then comes a choice of seven prayers (no. 125), of which five are addressed to the Father and two to Christ the Redeemer. They enumerate the effects one expects of the anointing, which differ according to different cases and circumstances. Then come the Lord's Prayer and the liturgy of Holy Communion. The concluding rite consists of a blessing, with a choice between several wordings. All persons who have given or received this sacrament, in circumstances obviously very different, can attest to the pastoral quality of this new ritual, which of course is used in the various vernacular translations or transcriptions.

The anointing within Mass features different introductory rites with reception of the sick and opening prayer. The liturgy of anointing takes place between the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist, in the same manner as described above.

When conducted in a hospital or institution, the rite has neither a liturgy of the Word nor a liturgy of Holy Communion.

Chapter 5 treats of viaticum, whether within Mass or outside Mass. In the first case, there is a baptismal profession of faith and a litany after the homily. Then comes the liturgy of the Eucharist with the sign of peace and communion received as viaticum. The concluding rites include a blessing, the apostolic pardon, and the dismissal.

The viaticum outside Mass comprises the greeting, the sprinkling with holy water, the instruction, the penitential rite, and the apostolic pardon. There follows the liturgy of the Word with reading, homily, baptismal profession of faith, and litany. The liturgy of the viaticum comprises the Lord's Prayer, the communion as viaticum, a silent prayer, and the prayer after communion. Finally, there are the concluding rites with the blessing and sign of peace.

Chapter 6 is the commendation of the dying. It comprises an introduction, a reading, the litany of the saints, the prayer of commendation, the prayer after death, a prayer for family and friends.

Chapter 7 contains prayers for the dead.

Chapter 8 deals with the rites used in exceptional circumstances, listing first the "Continuous Rite"; second, the rite to be used in case of emergencies; and third, the Christian Initiation for the Dying. The continuous rite is used when there is a reason to administer three, and sometimes four, sacraments at the same time. After the introductory rites, comprising a greeting and an instruction, comes the liturgy of penance with the sacrament, the penitential rite, the apostolic pardon, the baptismal profession of faith, and a litany. Then, if necessary, there follows the liturgy of confirmation. Then comes the liturgy of anointing, with the laying on of hands, the prayer over the oil, the anointing, and the prayer after anointing. The liturgy of viaticum follows with the Lord's Prayer, the communion, a silent prayer, and the prayer after communion. The concluding rites comprise a blessing and a sign of peace.

The rite for emergencies has an introduction, the sacrament of penance, the apostolic pardon, the Lord's Prayer, the communion as viaticum, the prayer before anointing, the anointing, the concluding prayer, and a blessing.

The Christian initiation for the dying contains as an introduction a greeting and a dialogue. Then comes a liturgy of the Word with the gospel and the litany. The liturgy of Christian initiation follows with renunciation of sin, profession of faith, baptism, anointing after baptism, confirmation in case of necessity, the Lord's Prayer, communion

as viaticum, and prayer after communion. The concluding rites comprise a blessing and a sign of peace.

In all this, what is intended to be established is the proper relationship between the three sacraments given to the sick and dying. In the old system, the normal order was penance, viaticum, anointing. From now on, each sacrament can be received by itself, and if, in case of danger of death, one uses the continuous rite preferred by Vatican II, the normal order is the sacrament of penance, the profession of faith recalling baptism, and confirmation if necessary, then anointing of the sick, finally viaticum.

One may deem that we have here an accumulation of sacraments within a limited time. There is the risk of duplication between the sacrament of penance and the anointing, because some of the prayers that follow it also ask for the forgiveness of sins; there is even a greater risk of duplication between the anointing of confirmation and the final anointing. In actual practice, one must be on the watch to avoid a certain ritualism that could very well burden the sick rather than relieve them.

But if these three sacraments—penance, anointing, viaticum—are administered in a climate of serenity, they constitute a sacramental whole parallel to the triad of the sacraments of Christian initiation. We do not have three independent sacraments but different sacramental steps of the liberation and divinization of Christians, who, associated with the passion of Christ and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, are now going into their Father's hands.

III. THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The publication and the use of the new ritual for the anointing of the sick have felicitously renewed the theology and the practice of this sacrament, but at the same time this renewal has given rise to a certain number of pastoral queries.

1. *The Meaning of the Sacrament*

The meaning of the sacrament is deduced from the Church's practice. Throughout the centuries, and in present-day practice, the sacrament is given either to the sick or to the dying, and it always includes an anointing with oil. Therefore, it is an ambivalent sacrament that strengthens human beings facing illness or death, and it is open to both possibilities. It is a participation in the power of liberation

possessed by Christ the Savior. This power can be manifested equally well by healing as by resurrection. The goal of the sacrament is the restoration of the whole human being, body and soul.

Such a restoration is the work of the Holy Spirit. The anointing is a sacrament of the Spirit, conferred through the laying on of hands but especially through the anointing with oil (hence its name). In all the sacraments that use anointing with holy oil, this signifies the coming down and the penetration of the Spirit into human beings. The anointing of the sick—or the wounded or old persons or those about to die—is therefore the sacrament of the spiritualization of the body, the sacrament of the indwelling of the Spirit in the body and the whole being of persons who must confront either a grave illness or death. This power of the Spirit either works against the forces causing the disintegration of the body in order to bring healing, or else by its presence and action is an initiation to resurrection and to the spiritualized life of the world beyond.

It is striking to see the importance of the Spirit in the ritual. The Spirit is mentioned in the blessing of the oil, in the formula that accompanies the anointing, and in the prayers that follow it. The anointing appears to be the sacrament through which human beings are filled with the strength and the grace of the Spirit for a struggle that exceeds their own power and endangers their lives. Humans receive the immense strength of the Spirit to make up for their weakness.

If one wants to express the effects of the sacrament in this spiritual perspective, one can say that the prime effect of the coming of the Spirit is comfort, a *confirmation* of the *infirm*. The gift of the Spirit is a gift of strength on several levels: spiritual strength that helps Christians to live what befalls them in faith and trust in God, for the present and the future; moral and psychological strength that assuages anguish, renews courage, brings peace and perhaps joy; strength that can produce, and in fact often does produce, physical relief, improvement, sometimes even a cure, because of the influence of the psychic state on the physical state.

The second effect of the gift of the Spirit is the remission of, or liberation from, sin. The sick remain sinners—the realization that death may be impending accentuates the consciousness of sin—and they strongly desire this liberation. The sacrament of the Spirit is a pardon that can replace the sacrament of pardon.

Finally, the gift of the life-giving Spirit leads to life, either physical life regained through healing and subsequently better appreciated than before the illness, or eternal life, life with God beyond the gates of death.

2. *The New Pastoral Queries*

The rediscovery of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick has elicited several pastoral questions. Some of them have been settled, others remain moot and open to the reflection and experience of the Church.

a) The subject of the sacrament

To whom can one and must one give the sacrament? To Christians battling against a serious illness or the danger of death, that is, those who need God's strength to endure a life that is either radically changed or threatened with destruction. Let us try to be more precise by following the directions given in the General Introduction of the Ritual (nos. 8–15). The subjects of the sacrament are persons who are either seriously ill, wounded, or markedly weakened by old age, even though there is no danger of death. They also are persons about to undergo surgery on account of a sickness or a wound.

The ritual states that the sacrament can be given to children only if they have reached the age of reason (no. 12). However, it sometimes happens that the mother of a sick little child asks the priest for the sacrament; it seems that one can assent to such a request and anoint both the child and the mother, for the healing of the child is connected with the consolation of its mother.[18]

Although the ritual does not explicitly say so, it seems that one can give the anointing to the infirm or handicapped (the blind, the deaf, and so on); these persons are stricken in their bodies because of a permanent condition or of an accident, and they need the strength of the sacrament to live in these abnormal conditions.[19] They are not sick

[18] This practice was already recommended by Caesarius of Arles in the sixth century; see *Sermon* 184, 4–5.

[19] This is the opinion of an author conversant with this sacrament, J. C. Didier, in his article "L'onction des malades dans la théologie contemporaine," *MD* 113 (1973) 57–80. He writes on page 70: "As they dissociate, as far as is possible, the sacrament of the sick from the circumstance of danger of death, theologians are bound to think of all the patients with a chronic condition, the handicapped, the

but infirm, and the ritual is destined not only for the sick but also for those who suffer from infirmity, either temporarily or permanently.

The question often arises whether the sacrament may be given to persons in danger of death for reasons other than sickness: those working in dangerous conditions, those engaged in perilous operations in time of war, or even those condemned to death. Hitherto the Church's practice has been to reserve the anointing to persons in danger of death because of illness; in other cases, the sacraments that are offered are penance and Eucharist.

b) The minister of the sacrament

We saw that, until the eighth century, the anointing was done either by a priest, a deacon, or a layperson. Present-day discipline reserves the administration of the sacrament to priests. However, we must note a difference in the vocabulary. The *PCS* (no. 16) states that the priest is the "proper minister" of the anointing of the sick. This expression, which was used by the Council of Trent (DS 910), does not totally exclude an extraordinary minister. On the other hand, the Code of Canon Law (can. 1003) stipulates that "only priests validly administer this sacrament."

Many arguments call for a more flexible discipline, allowing deacons, lay members of hospital chaplaincies, religious women caring for the sick, leaders of basic Christian communities to administer this sacrament.[20] Because of a lack of priests in many countries, Christians in large numbers do not receive this sacrament. Now, for one of the sacraments to be unavailable to many of the faithful is a situation that the Church cannot tolerate.

The reason generally adduced for reserving to priests the administration of this sacrament is its connection—in any case quite imprecise—with the forgiveness of sins, or at least the "liberation" from sins. To this argument one may counter that in emergency cases any

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infirm, the incurable of all kinds. . . . For many centuries the Church, which is a mother, did not hesitate to anoint all those sufferers. Must we say that this sacrament is no longer for them today, when they so urgently need its help?"

[20] The topic of the eventual ministry of deacons was broached by the Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy in a speech given to the National Conference of the Diaconate in the United States. The text is in *Briefing* (October 6, 1994): "It is necessary to definitively establish whether it is possible for deacons to administer the sacraments of the anointing of the sick and of penance, especially when it comes to deacons functioning as hospital chaplains."

Christian may administer baptism, which is the first and fundamental sacrament for the remission of sins.

As we know, several bishops have already delegated religious women to be ministers of this sacrament.

c) The repetition of the sacrament

As long as the anointing was given only to the dying, the question of its eventual repetition was hardly pertinent. But now the sacrament has regained its function of sacrament of the sick or infirm, particularly the incurable ones, so the new ritual foresees the possibility of repetition. In the case of long-term illnesses, the sacrament will be given again "if during the same illness the person's condition becomes more serious" (no. 9). Such a turn for the worse must be appraised not only from the medical point of view but also from the human point of view, that is, with regard to the manner in which the patient bears his or her illness.

d) The community celebrations

The perspective of the *PCS* remains rather individualistic with regard to the administration of this sacrament. Chapter 4 mentions that this rite can be used to confer the sacrament to several patients together. Numbers 108–110 are devoted to the community celebration: Celebration of Anointing in a Large Congregation. This would occur during a pilgrimage or a diocesan or parochial event. Whether at Mass or outside Mass, such a celebration can become a concelebration by several priests, and it must also emphasize the place and the role of the sick and infirm within the people of God.

Experience shows that such celebrations are the best pedagogy leading to the understanding of the sacrament: they unfold in an atmosphere of serenity and solidarity, and they minimize the dramatic aspect of the reception of the sacrament. Besides, they demonstrate to the assembly and to the sick themselves that, far from living on the margins of God's people, the sick are a presence of the suffering Christ, an incarnation of the passion of Christ, in the local community. Therefore these celebrations can be a potent comfort to the sick and infirm; they also bring a faith vision to families as well as to the members of the nursing profession. In various churches a Mass of the sick takes place once or twice a year with administration of the sacrament to those who desire it; this is an excellent way of reminding everyone of the place and role of the sick in the ecclesial body of Christ.

Conclusion

It is fortunate that after long centuries of eclipse, our time has recaptured the richness and the power of this sacrament. This rediscovery is far from complete, since in many places the lack of ministers causes this sacrament to be unavailable to the faithful. In many countries and regions the reform has not changed anything, and extreme unction continues to be given only to the dying, as minimally conscious as possible. Wherever the sacrament enjoys better conditions, its adaptation to the hospital milieu needs further reflection and experience. It is important that the catechesis on the anointing of the sick be offered at the proper time to all the faithful, the sick, and their caretakers. Finally, it is necessary that the sacrament retain its ambivalence: anointing of the sick for the sick and infirm, final anointing for the dying. To both groups it imparts the strength of the Holy Spirit.

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D. Holy Orders and Ministries

Antonio Santantoni

10

Orders and Ministries in the First Four Centuries

In the first half of the third century, the *Apostolic Tradition* handed on to us the first organized and cohesive ritual of ordinations, displaying what would henceforth be the permanent canonical triad of sacred orders in the Church (episcopate, presbyterate, diaconate). But we are not yet in the presence here of the first and primitive expression of Christian experience in the area of ministry; rather we have here an already greatly developed, theologically defined, and canonically established stage of what it is appropriate to call the sacrament of orders: a tripartite sacrament that is rigorously structured according to a hierarchical scheme.

It is with Hippolytus that the manuals and the researches of the liturgists into the sacrament of orders usually begin, according to an agreement now almost universal, even if never codified. But Hippolytus was writing about two centuries after the first apostolic writings and after the disappearance of the last direct witnesses of the Easter event and of all those who had personally known the Twelve and the apostles of the first generation. The young Church had to deal with this loss by preparing structures for cooptation and succession that would permit the apostolic charism to continue playing its part in the Church. This need was met by the various ministries and the increasingly more detailed definition of their roles, responsibilities, and powers.

For this reason, no treatment of the history and theology of the ritual of ordinations can be truly persuasive unless it takes as its starting point the very origins of the Church's ministry.

1. *Ministries and Charisms in the New Testament*

Orders, sacred orders, priestly ordination, sacrament of orders, major and minor orders, priesthood, priestly ministry, and so on, are words

and concepts relatively foreign to the New Testament. The New Testament texts seem to know no other concept than the very general one of "ministry," with its various Greek equivalents: διακονία (service), ἐξουσία (authority), οἰκονομία (administration), χάρις or χαρίσμα (unmerited gift), πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω (send), ἀπόστολος (one sent), and πρεσβεύω (to function as an ambassador).

The model and source of every mission-ministry is the One Sent par excellence, the minister-servant of Yahweh, Jesus Christ (Heb 3:1ff.; 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25). It is he who chooses and calls his disciples and ministers (Acts 20:24; Rom 1:5; Eph 4:11-14) and gives the helps (charisms) they need in order to carry out worthily the ministry entrusted to them. The model of this calling and investing is the choice of the Twelve and the gift of the Spirit on Pentecost. The Spirit is thus the one who distributes ministries, coordinates them, and confirms them in order that the Church may never be deprived of them and that the variety of ministries may manifest the inexhaustible riches of divine grace (1 Cor 12). Paul's thought finds its full expression in the metaphor of the human body with its multiplicity of members (1 Cor 12:12-30).

The same metaphor of the human body introduces an embryonic hierarchy among the charisms and ministries of the apostolic Church. 1 Cor 12:28 says this: "God has appointed in the church *first* apostles, *second* prophets, *third* teachers, *then* workers of miracles, *then* healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues" (see also Eph 4:11-13). The text shows that at this period, when foundations were being laid, the ministries of the apostles,[1] the prophets, and the teachers were especially important.

Another important point is that in Paul's lists, which at times are quite detailed, neither the elders (πρεσβύτεροι), also called bishops (ἐπίσκοποι, inspectors) nor the deacons are included.

2. *Ministries and Worship in the Apostolic Church*

Strange though it may seem, the apostolic Church does not seem to have been too concerned about clearly establishing the terms of the relationship between ministries and worship. This is true even of the

[1] Exegetes today are pretty much agreed on distinguishing between the *apostles* mentioned in these passages and the *Twelve,* at least two of whose prerogatives could not possibly be passed to their successors: their status as direct witnesses of

Eucharist: "Luke [= Acts] does not think of the ministries of the young Church in relation either to the Eucharist or to a power that enables a person effectively to perform certain supernatural actions."[2] The few bits of information left to us are anything but simple evaluations. Here, in necessarily brief form, is a quick sketch of the cultic powers and functions assigned to various ministries in the New Testament.

The Twelve: These are the apostles par excellence, those who knew the Master in person, followed the events of his human life from baptism to ascension, and received the Spirit of Pentecost. These men baptized; they imposed hands that the Spirit might be given to neophytes or to bestow a mission or a ministry (see Acts 6:6 on the seven "deacons" of Jerusalem). They certainly presided at the Eucharist (although this is not explicitly stated), preached, made laws, excommunicated, and reconciled. All other ministries in the Church derive from theirs through participation and extension. Their office, insofar as it was constitutive of the mandate of the Twelve (eyewitness testimony to the messianic work of Christ and foundational age of the Church) cannot be passed on. What can be passed is their power to govern, teach, and worship.

Apostles: These are not to be confused with the Twelve. They were missionaries sent out from the communities, with authority suited to the nature of their mission. They were sent out two by two (following the example given by Jesus in Mark 6:7), with letters of authorization (Acts 18:27); the communities receiving them were to receive them "as the Lord himself" (Gal 4:14; *Didache,* 11, 4). For their part, they were not to remain long in the same place (*Didache,* 11, 4: no more than two days). They imposed hands in order to confer the rank of bishop-presbyter (2 Tim 1:6), to bestow the gift of the Spirit (Acts 19:6), to heal the sick (Acts 28:8). One of their functions seems to have been to preside at the Eucharist (see Acts 20:7-12).

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the Easter event and their role as the first ones sent to found the Church. See A. George, "Dès Douze aux apôtres et à leurs successeurs," in *Le ministère sacerdotal* (Lyon, 1970) 23–53.

[2] J. Dupont, "Les ministères de l'Eglise naissante d'après les Actes des Apôtres," in *Ministères et célébration de l'Eucharistie,* SA 61, Sacramentum I (Rome, 1973) 98. The passage cited goes on to say: "It can be worth adding immediately that Luke's perspective on Christian ministries is their *continuity* with the ministry of the apostles" (ibid.).

Prophets: This was a very important ministry, even liturgically. Among their functions was authority to impose hands in order to confer a mission (Acts 13:3).[3] Paul sets great store by the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14) because of its ability to build up the assembly. "Through prophecy" and with the laying on of hands episcopacy was conferred (1 Tim 4:14; see 1:18).[4] The *Didache,* which provides a model for the Eucharistic Prayer, says that prophets must be left free to "give thanks" as they wish. In fact, according to the *Didache,* the prophets are "your high priests" (13, 3). And as did the priests of the old Law, the prophets offered the first fruits of the harvests (13, 1-2).

Teachers (διδάσκαλοι): With the evangelists they shared in the ministry of preaching and had the duty of preaching, proclaiming the gospel, and explaining the Scriptures. In the future, their role would be taken over primarily by the bishops and presbyters.

Elders (πρεσβύτεροι or ἐπίσκοποι): In the New Testament the two terms were applied to the same persons (Acts 20:17, 28).[5] The first term (elder, πρεσβύτερος) identified the ministry; the second (ἐπίσκοπος) pointed rather to an aspect of the ministry (vigilance). Some important points: the most frequent term is "elder" (πρεσβύτερος: eighteen times with the present meaning), while the term "bishop" is much rarer (four times with our meaning, and used once of Christ). The word "episcopate" (ἐπισκοπή) occurs twice, meaning the office;[6] the term "presbytery" (πρεσβυτέριον) signifies a college or body of presbyters (the plural "presbyters" is more often used with that meaning).

[3] The five prophets of Antioch included Saul and Barnabas: after the Spirit had chosen them for the mission, the others prayed and laid hands on them.

[4] The translations usually render the genitive singular προφητείας as a plural (at a sign from the prophets, through the intervention of the prophets or prophetic intervention). But it could perhaps be better rendered: "by means of a prophecy (uttered) with the laying on of hands." In this case, "prophecy" signifies an epiclesis or a Eucharist of investiture (ordination anaphora).

[5] In this well-known passage Paul sends from Miletus for the elders (πρεσβύτεροι) of Ephesus and urges them to watch over the flock of which they have been appointed guardians (ἐπίσκοποι).

[6] In the first instance the term ἐπισκοπή is used of the apostolic office of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:20); in the second (1 Tim 3:1) it refers to the office of overseer (ἐπίσκοπος) in the Christian community. X. Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary of the New Testament* (New York, 1980), remarks that the word does not have the modern meaning of "bishop."

In Philippians 1:1 Paul greets the brethren ("the saints") "with the bishops and deacons"; neither the bishops nor the deacons are ever mentioned together with the presbyters in concrete situations. The interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 5:17-22 is not without its difficulties;[7] both the apostle (2 Tim 1:6) and the college of presbyters (1 Tim 4:14[8]) impose hands on Timothy. John begins his last two letters by speaking of himself in solemn fashion: "The elder to the elect lady" (2 John 1) and "The elder to the beloved Gaius" (3 John 1). The author of the First Letter of Peter gives himself the same title: "As an elder myself . . . I exhort the elders among you" (1 Pet 5:1). As for other cultic functions of the elders, James has them summoned to pray and anoint the sick, and, a little later on, *Didache* 15, 1 ascribes to bishops and deacons the authority to do what the prophets and teachers do, namely, to pray, give thanks, and teach.

Deacons: Another difficult problem. The Catholic theological tradition has been unanimous in regarding the Seven of Jerusalem (Acts 6:3-6) as the first deacons, men appointed by the community and invested with their office through the laying on of hands by the apostles. Their stated task was the service of widows and the poor, especially service at table. There is no reference to a cultic service. 1 Timothy 3:8-13 gives a description of the true deacon but says nothing about his functions beyond a general kind of service.

3. *The Ritual of Ordination in the Third Century*

We have no choice but to start from what has been said if we want to gauge the real importance of the texts and rites of ordination that have

[7] The setting is different in each of the two passages: chapter 3 gives a kind of portrait of bishops and deacons, while chapters 5–6 are a guide for Timothy's behavior in dealing with the faithful, with widows, presbyters, slaves, true and false teachers, and the rich who have embraced the faith; the section ends with a fervent exhortation to Timothy to practice the Christian virtues, be constant in his ministry, and be firm in the faith he has confessed and proclaimed. It is difficult to say whether we are already in the presence of something new, namely, an ἐπίσκοπος who is already a "bishop" (as the more traditional Catholic theology claims) or rather in the presence of an apostle "of the second generation" or of a fully transitional figure (in a time of awareness of a new age that is calling for new forms of service and government).

[8] This passage is too often undervalued theologically; it takes on its full significance especially in relation to what is set down in the *Apostolic Tradition,* as we shall see in a moment.

been handed down to us in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus.[9] Over and above the individual elements of the rite, noteworthy though these are, it is the entire theological and ecclesiological formulation that is radically innovative in relation to that of the apostolic Church. As compared to this ritual, few things can give us an idea of the road traveled in less than two centuries. These texts, these gestures, show a Church now structured according to a strictly hierarchic ladder. At the top is the bishop, who has monarchic authority; around him, but on a lower rung, is the college of his presbyters, and, on a still lower rung, his deacons, who are dedicated primarily to the service of the altar and of the bishop.

a) The ordination of a bishop

The ritual[10] is permeated by a profoundly theological and mystical inspiration. In the very act of his election and ordination the bishop must already be seen as the head, center, and point of reference of his entire church. For this reason a bishop must be chosen and accepted by the entire people, the clergy, and the authorities.[11]

Sunday is the day for ordination, for it is the day of the resurrection and of Pentecost, and therefore the day of the outpouring of the Spirit and the day of mission (John 20:21-22; Acts 2:1-4).[12]

The ministers of the ordination are all the bishops present, the pastors of the neighboring churches. There is certainly a theological intention at work here, namely, to strengthen the solidarity (today we

[9] A very important text, not only because it gives us the first complete ritual of ordinations but also, and above all, because of its influence on all the ancient liturgies, especially the Oriental. The writing of the work is placed around 225; the most reliable attribution is still to Hippolytus the martyr, who for a short while was a schismatic bishop of Rome. The bibliography on the *Apostolic Tradition* is abundant and rather difficult. The classic critical edition is that of B. Botte, *La Tradition apostolique de Saint Hippolyte: Essai de reconstitution,* LQF 39 (Münster i. Wf., 1963); henceforth abbreviated *TA*.

[10] *TA* 2, pp. 4–6.

[11] The regulation would remain in force for many centuries, although we may presume that over time it was more and more frequently disregarded. Celestine I wrote this supremely lapidary statement: "No bishop can be imposed on those who do not accept him; the consent of the clergy, the people, and the authorities is required" (Letter IV: To the Bishops of Vienne and Narbonne, 5 [PL 50:434–435]).

[12] In the tenth century the Romano-Germanic Pontifical would give the reason in so many words: "Because on that day Christ enlightened the hearts of his disciples through the gift of the Spirit" (*PRG* I, LXI, pp. 198–199).

would say collegiality) of the episcopate. Perhaps there was not absent the intention also of forestalling the dangers of heresy, schism, and personal ambition. There may even have been a recollection of the now distant age when it was the presbyteral college that imposed hands on the new ἐπίσκοπος, according to the clear testimony of 1 Timothy 4:14. Times had changed; now the monarchical episcopate had been universally and definitively established; the powers, tasks, prerogatives, and even the typologies of bishops and prebyters were now clearly distinguished. In order not to lose the very meaningful collective gesture, the neighboring bishops took the place of the presbyteral college.

The role of the presbyters: the text seems a little harsh in assigning the presbyters the role of mere spectators, apart, of course, from prayer "in the heart," which, however, is common to all present, including the lay faithful. Is this a clear manifestation of a theological awareness or the echo of an antipresbyteral polemic?[13]

The laying on of hands is the climactic moment in the ordination. First, all the bishops present impose hands together upon the candidate; then the principal ordaining bishop imposes his hands while uttering the prayer of consecration.

The role of the assembly: "All are to remain silent, praying in their hearts for the descent of the Spirit." A splendid, magnificent text, in which silence is not empty of action but has a mystical fullness.

When the prayer of ordination is complete,[14] "all offer the kiss of peace," accompanying it perhaps with an acclamation.[15] Finally, the new bishop celebrates his first Eucharist.[16]

The prayer of ordination has great theological and mystical worth. Here are its leading ideas:

The episcopate is a factor in the history of salvation, which is now bringing to completion the work already begun in the Old Testament by fulfilling the promises and figures of the old law. It is these "kings and priests" who ensure that there will always be worship in the temple of the Lord.

[13] This was not a rare occurrence. There were the cases submitted by Decentius, bishop of Gubbio, to the attention of Innocent I, and the antidiaconal polemic in the *Statuta ecclesiae antiquae*.

[14] *TA* 4, p. 10.

[15] Ibid., 4, p. 11, note 6.

[16] Ibid., 3-4, pp. 10–17.

The bishop continues, through time and space, the messianic mystery of Christ and of his anointing by the Holy Spirit, which he in turn transmitted to his apostles and the latter to their successors, the bishops. In this Church which the apostles founded the bishop is the pastor. Every bishop is a successor of the apostles and, at a deeper level, a vicar of Christ.

The prayer calls down from the Father on the candidate the helps that will enable him to be a solicitous and worthy pastor, to offer the gifts of the Church so as "to brighten the face of God," to forgive sins or retain them, to distribute tasks and functions in his church, and to excommunicate and reconcile. The only thing lacking is an explicit reference to the ministry of the word. Later tradition will have very little to add.

b) Presbyteral ordination

The unpretentiousness of the rite of presbyteral ordination is striking after the solemnity and profound theology of the ordination of a bishop. Nothing is said about the election or choice of the candidate. The only thing prescribed for the rite of ordination is the laying on of hands by the bishop and the entire presbytery.[17] But these two impositions do not have the same value as they had in the ordination of a bishop, because a presbyter can only receive and not give;[18] he can only "sign" *(consignare),* the bishop alone ordains.

The prayer of ordination is rather disappointing; its high point is the prayer for the *spiritum gratiae et consilii presbyteri,* in order that the presbyter may support and govern his people with a clean heart. The only typology mentioned is that of the seventy elders who helped Moses in his difficult work.[19]

c) The ordination of a deacon

A deacon, too, must be chosen and accepted by the people. The bishop alone imposes hands on him, since he "is not ordained to the priest-

[17] No justification is given for this collegial gesture of the presbyters, but the reason will be given with a wealth of arguments when the text speaks of the ordination of a deacon. Hippolytus strongly emphasizes the way in which the gesture demonstrates collegiality: it is the sign of a communion in grace and ministry: *"communem presbyterii spiritum," "propter communem et similem cleri spiritum"* (*TA* 8, p.24).

[18] Ibid., 8, p. 22.

[19] Ibid., 7, p. 20.

hood but to the service of the bishop, so that he will do what the bishops orders."[20]

The formula of ordination is rather brief and does not stand out for any wealth of content. It consists essentially of a prayer to God, who sent his own Son into the world to do his will, that he would send the same "Spirit of grace and zeal" upon the candidate. Then the candidate will be able worthily to serve in the Church and present in God's temple the gifts offered "by the heir to the high priest" (the bishop).[21] These last words implicitly introduce the only typological element of the consecratory anaphora: if the bishop is the heir to the high priest (Aaron), the deacons are heirs to the Levites.

4. *Ordinations in the fourth century*

There are not many differences between what we know of third-century ordinations and what has been handed down to us from the fourth century. The ritual was unchanged in the West, and the most interesting novelties all come from the East: in Egypt, the three prayers of ordination in the Euchologion of Serapion; in Syria, the ritual in the *Apostolic Constitutions,* which contains some noteworthy innovations: the laying of the Gospels on the head of the bishop being ordained (this rite was to have great success) and the laying of hands on subdeacon and lector as well; in addition, there are only three ordaining bishops who lay hands on the bishop elect,[22] while the people voice their choice or confirm their acceptance three times. For the rest, the ritual in the *Apostolic Constitutions* faithfully follows that of the *Apostolic Tradition* and will set the pattern for all later Oriental rituals.[23]

At this point, it can be said that a long road has been traveled at the theological level (in ecclesiology no less than in sacramental theology) during the three centuries since apostolic times. The time was ripe for a great flowering of ritual that would give full (and sometimes redundant) expression to the new synthesis.

[20] Ibid., 8, p. 22.

[21] Ibid., 8, p. 26.

[22] In obedience to the Council of Nicaea (325), canon 4.

[23] I limit my essay to the Western rites; for basic information on the Eastern rites see P. Jounel, "Ordinations," in *CP* 3:144–151.

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Stefano Parenti

11

Ordinations in the East

This study will deal with the Byzantine tradition, since it is more representative and more widely followed than the other traditions of the Christian East. In speaking of the transmission of ministries, this tradition uses two completely interchangeable terms: "election/appointment" (χειροτονία) and "imposition of hands" (χειροθεσία), which were, for a long time, mistakenly regarded as translations of a pair proper to medieval Scholasticism: "minor orders" and "major orders." In the area of ministries the Byzantine Churches, like all the apostolic Churches, recognize episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate as three distinct degrees of priesthood (ιερωσύνη) that have their first and direct source in the will of Christ. Along with these, we find today the lectorate and the subdiaconate, two ministries that the Church has instituted over the course of time, together with others that have now disappeared.

Although the Western terms "orders" and "ordination" are known, but perhaps avoided, in the Byzantine world, I shall ordinarily use them here because they will be more familiar to the reader and in order to avoid any unnecessary purism. I shall therefore maintain the current distinction between ordained ministries and instituted ministries.

1. *The Declarative Formula "Divine Grace"*

All the Eastern traditions contain, although in textually varying forms, the now famous formula which, in the majority of instances, the bishop recites at the beginning of the rite for the conferral of the ordained ministries. Here is the text from the Byzantine ordination of a bishop according to Byzantine euchologion *Barberini gr. 336:* "Divine grace,

which always heals what is sick and makes up for what is lacking, appoints (προχειρίζεται) as bishop priest N., who is very dear to God. Let us pray for him that the grace of the most Holy Spirit will come upon him."[1]

The fame of the formula has been to some extent created by the many scholarly studies devoted to it for more than thirty years now. It is undoubtedly a formula that can claim great antiquity, as Botte has shown, inasmuch as it is implicitly or explicitly attested by Gregory of Nazianzus,[2] John Chrysostom,[3] and Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite.[4] Botte has identified the formula "Divine grace" as the Eastern *form* of ordination; his view is strengthened by the fact that in the *Barberini* euchologion, as well as (according to him) in the Western-Syrian and Maronite traditions, the prayer is accompanied by the laying on of the hand(s); he sees it as originating in the Syrian world.[5]

Botte's interpretation is challenged by Gy, who plays down the importance of the formula, which, in any case, was to become important only in the period when the prayers of ordination began to be recited in a low voice, after the fashion of "silence during the canon"; in the eighth century the *Barberini* euchologion itself regards this practice as now the norm. Rather than being the *formula* of the sacrament, however, the prayer "Divine grace" would be a juridical declaration and belong more to canon law than to liturgy. As for its origin, Gy suggests that this is to be found in the Church of Jerusalem.[6]

The entire question was recently taken up again by Bradshaw, who supports and confirms Gy's view. He points out that in the Byzantine tradition subsequent to the *Barberini* euchologion, the formula "Divine grace" takes on increasingly prominent juridical connotations, being introduced by the phrase "By the election and with the approval" (ψῆφῳ καὶ δοκιμασίᾳ), the use of which in decrees for the translation of

[1] *BAR* 157, 3.

[2] *Oratio* 18, 35 (PG 35:1032): "Divine grace is proclaimed, a grace that comes from God and not from men."

[3] *De sacerdotio* A, I (PG 48:662), where the writer condemns ordinations not effected by divine grace.

[4] *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, 5 (PG 3:509), speaks of a "proclamation of ordinations and ordinands" by the bishop, who is not acting out of any grace of his own.

[5] B. Botte, "La formula d'ordination 'la divine grâce' dans les rites orientaux," *L'Orient syrien* 2 (1957) 285–296.

[6] P.-M. Gy, "Ancient Ordination Prayers," *SL* 13 (1979) 72–75.

bishops is attested from the first half of the eighth century.[7] Moreover, the imposition of the hand takes place in connection not with "Divine grace" but with the prayer that follows this.[8] But the matter is further complicated by the fact that even the *Barberini* euchologion provides for a (second!) imposition of the hand (this does not seem to have been noted) as the prayer of ordination is being recited.[9]

The problem can be easily resolved if we look into the few euchologia from the tenth/eleventh century, all of them from the periphery and of an archaizing kind, which reproduce the rubrical tradition for episcopal ordination as found in *Barberini:* in none of them does the imposition of hands take place at the moment when the archbishop reads the declarative formula "Divine grace."[10] The testimony of the *Barberini* euchologion remains a *hapax* in the ancient manuscript tradition.[11] This may explain why in other traditions (among the Copts, for example) it is recited by a deacon.[12]

2. *The Rites of Ordination in the Barberini Euchologion*

Despite its origin on the periphery of the Byzantine world, this well-known, already mentioned Italo-Byzantine euchologion certainly represents an authoritative tradition in regard to ordinations, and not

[7] For example, on occasion of the *translatio* of Germanus from Cyzicus to Constantinople; see *Theophanis Chronographia,* ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883; reprint New York–Hildesheim, 1980) 1:299, lines 8–14, which is mentioned by O. Raquez, "Les confessions de foi de la Chirotonie episcopale des Eglises grecques," in *Traditio et progressio. Studi liturgici in onore del Prof. Adrien Nocent OSB* (AL 12 = SA 95; Rome, 1988) 470. But see G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968) 1542, s.v. ψῆφος.

[8] P. F. Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West* (New York, 1990) 26–32.

[9] See *BAR* 157, 7.

[10] These are: scroll *Sinai gr.* 956 (provenance uncertain; 10th cent.), for which see A.Dmitr, 2:17, and euchologia *Sinai gr.* 959 (Middle East, 11th cent.), f. 123v, and the *Oxford Bodleian Auct E.*5.13 (Messina, 1120–1131), the rubrics of which are published in A. Jacob, "Un euchologe du Saint-Sauveur 'in lingua Phari' de Messine: Le Bodeleianus Auct. E.5.13," *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 50 (1980) n. 31.1.

[11] It can be explained either as an error of the copyist or as the result of influence from those Eastern traditions (Syrian, Melkite, etc.) which add an imposition of the hand(s) to the formula "Divine grace." In fact, there are many Eastern influences discernible throughout the codex.

[12] See, most recently, E. Lanne, "Dans la tradition alexandrine l'ordination du patriarche," in *Ordination et ministères,* BELS 85 (Rome, 1996) 139–155.

only because of the antiquity of the documents, which goes back to the eighth century. In fact, the ordaining prelate is here almost always described as an archbishop and only twice as a simple bishop (in the conferral of the lectorate and subdiaconate); on another two occasions (ordination of a bishop and blessing of an abbot) the codex gives him the title of patriarch.[13]

The ordained ministries are conferred during the Eucharistic liturgy; the instituted ministries are conferred immediately before it. The euchological structure of the several rites is symmetrical and can be outlined as follows:

a) Bishop, presbyter, deacon, deaconess:
   1) Proclamation: "Divine grace"
   2) Prayer 1
   3) Litanic intercessions
   4) Prayer 2
   5) Explanatory rites (vesting, etc.)

b) Subdeacon and lector:
   1) Prayer
   2) Explanatory rites

Let us look now at the main points in each of the three rites.

a) Bishop

The ordination of a bishop takes place after the hymn "Thrice Holy" (the τρισάγιον), which is the ancient entrance song of the Eucharistic liturgy. The archbishop reads aloud the formula "Divine grace," written on an official document (χάρτης), while imposing his hand on the candidate and at the same time inviting all to pray; to this invitation the assembly replies with a threefold κύριε ἐλέησον. At this point the archbishop opens the book of the Gospels and places it on the head of the ordinand; letting the other two bishops hold it there, he traces the sign of the cross three times on the head of the ordinand and then imposes his hand while reciting the first prayer. At the end of the prayer, one of the concelebrating bishops recites a litany, while the archbishop, for his part, recites the second prayer, evidently in a low voice. He then places the pallium (ὠμοφόριον)[14] on the newly ordained, and

[13] *BAR* 158, 15; 167, 3.

[14] M. Berger, "Pallium romain et omophorion oriental," *Not* 16 (1980) 405–410.

the latter exchanges the kiss of peace, but only with the bishops. The archbishop then mounts his throne in the apse and presides over the Eucharist, which begins immediately with the biblical readings.[15]

b) Presbyter

The ordination of a presbyter takes place after the processional transfer of the bread and wine for the Eucharist and in the setting of the preanaphoral rites of the *accessus ad altare*. The archbishop reads the formula "Divine grace"; immediately after this, the candidate is led to him and kneels; the archbishop traces three signs of the cross on the candidate's head, imposes his hand, and reads the first prayer. When the prayer is finished, this time a priest recites the litany, while the archbishop imposes his hand and reads the second prayer. After this prayer the ordaining prelate places the front end of the diaconal stole (ὀράριον) on the man's breast and then vests him with the *paenula* or chasuble (φελώνιον or φαινώλιον).[16] He exchanges the kiss of peace with the newly ordained and invites him to take his place among the presbyters. At the beginning of the Eucharistic anaphora the newly ordained receives one of the loaves from the archbishop; he will hold it in his hands until the elevation and then return it to the archbishop.[17] When the time for communion comes, the newly ordained is the first to receive it from the hands of the ordaining prelate.[18]

c) Deacon

At the end of the Eucharistic anaphora the candidate for the diaconate is brought, as the presbyter was, directly before the archbishop, and the entire rite then unfolds as in presbyteral ordination: two special prayers are recited with, between them, a litany that is, however, recited this time by a deacon. When the second prayer is complete, the new deacon is vested with the diaconal phelonion (φελώνιον) and receives

[15] *BAR* 157–158.

[16] For this and the liturgical vestments mentioned, see T. Papas, *Studien zur Geschichte der Messgewänder im byzantinischen Ritus,* Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 3 (Munich, 1964); idem, "Βιβλιογραφία ἱερατικῶν ἀμφίων τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ τύπου," Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς φάρος 56 (1974) 408–416; E. Piltz, *Kamelaukion et mitra: Insignes byzantins impériaux et ecclésiastiques,* Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Figura, Uppsala Studies in the History of Art 15 (Stockholm, 1977).

[17] S. Salaville, "Un rite d'ordination en Orient: l'hostie dans la main de l'ordonné," *Echos d'Orient* 16 (1913) 424–430.

[18] *BAR* 159–160.

the diaconal stole (ὀράριον). After exchanging the kiss of peace with the ordaining prelate, the deacon receives the flabellum (ριπίδιον) from him and waves it over the Eucharistic gifts. After he has received communion, the celebrant gives him the Eucharistic chalice, which it is his office to administer, and he extends it to all who communicate. A rubric specifies some aspects of a diaconal ordination when this takes place during the Lenten Liturgy of the Presanctified.[19]

d) Deaconess

Her ordination is identical in its fundamental structure with that of a deacon, but there are also some important differences. The litany between the two prayers is not recited, as we might expect, by a deaconess but by a deacon; as sign of her order, she receives the diaconal stole but wears it so that the two ends hang in front (like the episcopal and presbyteral stole in the Roman rite), and she does not wave the flabellum over the Eucharistic gifts. Like the deacon, she receives communion at the altar, and the chalice is given to her, but at that time the new deaconess was not, or no longer was, a minister, and therefore she is told to place the chalice on the altar table.[20]

e) Subdeacon and Lector/Cantor

The conferral of the instituted ministries takes place before the beginning of the Eucharistic liturgy while the bishop is still in the *secretarium* (σκευοφυλάκιον). The subdiaconate is conferred by the imposition of the hand and a prayer. The newly ordained then utters three times the obscure warning "How many (are) faithful!" (ὅσοι πιστοί). The euchologion prescribes that the newly ordained is to wash the bishop's hands (during the liturgy?) and receive communion from him.[21]

Nothing is said of the time or place for the appointment (that is the term used) of a lector or cantor, who receives the tonsure before being brought to the bishop. After the recital of the short assigned prayer, the bishop, in the case of a lector, asks him to read some lines from the book of epistles, or, in the case of a cantor, asks him to prove himself by singing a responsorial psalm (προκείμενον).[22]

[19] *BAR* 161–162.
[20] *BAR* 163–164.
[21] *BAR* 165.
[22] *BAR* 166.

After providing for the instituted ministries, the *Barberini* euchologion has the liturgical appointment of an abbot (ἡγούμενος), which is celebrated at the patriarchal residence.[23] Further on in the codex, there is a prayer "for making a cleric of a layman," that is, for the clerical tonsure; the manuscript tradition for this seems limited to peripheral regions.[24]

3. *Ordinations at Constantinople in the Eleventh Century*

As was said earlier, the textual and rubrical tradition of the *Barberini* euchologion was taken over in several peripheral manuscripts of the tenth to the twelfth centuries, although these differ in several ways in their ordering—descending, ascending, and mixed—of the various ministries.[25] Meanwhile, ms. *Paris Coislin* 213, the first posticonoclastic witness to the euchologion of Constantinople, goes back to 1027; in it the rites of ordination show clear signs of having evolved beyond the *Barberini* euchologion.[26]

Above all, the description of the rites becomes very detailed, and in this new rubrical setting not only the two prayers but also the litany that separates them are now recited in a low voice. As a result, the ordinations become, even liturgically, the exclusive province of the clergy. Thus in episcopal ordination, when the pallium is given, the clergy greet the new prelate with the acclamation: "He is worthy!" while the *Coislin* euchologion has him preside at the Eucharist and distribute communion to the concelebrants.[27]

For the other ordinations few details need to be mentioned, except that the canonical ages decreed by the Council in Trullo of 691/692 are respected: thirty for the presbyterate, twenty-five for the diaconate, and forty for a deaconess.[28] In addition, the laws become extremely

[23] *BAR* 167–168.

[24] *BAR* 240.

[25] The *Sinai gr.* 956 scroll places the ordination of a deaconess before that of a bishop (A.Dmitr, 2, 17), while in euchologion *Sinai gr.* 959 the blessing of an abbot precedes the ordination of a deaconness (the only two blessings preserved); the *Oxford Bodleian Auct E*.4.13 follows the ascending order (Jacob, "Un euchologe du Saint-Sauveur," nn. 27-32); see also Gy, "Ancient Ordination Prayers," 76.

[26] *Coislin* 213. *Euchologe de la Grande Eglise,* ed. J. Duncan (Rome, 1982) 36–50.

[27] Ibid., 38.

[28] P.-P. Joannou, *Discipline générale antique*. Tome I^{er}, I^{ère} partie: *Les canons des conciles oecuméniques (II^{e}–IX^{e} s.)* Pontificia Commissione per la redazione del codice del Diritto Canonico Orientale (Grottaferrata, 1962) 143.

demanding for a deaconess, requiring that she be "a chaste virgin and, according to present-day practice, a nun with the great habit." In presbyteral ordination, the *traditio panis* is reduced to the giving of a fragment (μερίδα), and it is the duty of the newly ordained to recite the "ambo" prayer at the end of the liturgy and to celebrate the Eucharist on seven successive days. It is clear that a ritual "octave" has been instituted, as in the case of baptism, marriage, and monastic profession.[29] In the codex, special prominence is given to the advancement to the presbyterate of the archdeacon of the Great Church; on the other hand, the ordinations of deacon and deaconess display no important particulars.[30]

The institution of subdeacon and lector no longer takes place in the sacristy but at the doors of the church, reflecting in turn the gradual shortening of the entrance procession of the liturgy. No mention is any longer made of the subdeacon being given communion by the bishop, and the clerical tonsure of a lector is now reserved to the bishop.[31] To the instituted ministries already known the Paris euchologion adds those of the candle-bearer (κηρόφωρος) and the deputy (δεπουτάτος), two of the many offices (ὀφφίκια) of the cathedral of Constantinople.[32]

The version of the rubrics in the *Coislin* euchologion soon became widely used. In the twelfth century we find them in southern Italy in euchologia *Vaticano gr.* 1972[33] and *Napoli II C* 21 (12th/13th cent.). These books are unusual in that alongside the Byzantine prayers there are also prayers taken from the *Apostolic Constitutions*,[34] as well as an interesting Greek translation of the Roman ordinations; the euchologia share these peculiarities with the later *Messina gr.* 124 of the fourteenth century.[35] For its part, euchologion *Γ.β. I* of Grottaferrata, though

[29] Duncan, *Coislin* 213, 41.

[30] Ibid., 42.

[31] Ibid., 48–50.

[32] Ibid., 50–51. See J. Darrouzes, *Recherches sur les rites de l'Eglise byzantine,* Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 11 (Paris, 1970) 231, n. 4, and 284, n. 4.

[33] The texts of this ms. are published by J. Morin, *De Sacris Ecclesiae Ordinationibus* (Paris, 1965) 97–104.

[34] Morin, *De . . . ordinationibus*, 121–122. In all likelihood, the prayers were taken from the "ancient Greek codex" in the library of the Clerics Regular at the church of S. Andrea della Valle in Rome (Morin, 126, notes d and g); see *Les Constitutions Apostoliques,* 3, ed. M. Metzger, SCh 336 (Paris, 1987) 218–220, 222–223.

[35] Partial description in A. Mancini, "Codices Graeci monasterii Messanensis S. Salvatoris," *Atti della R. Accademia Peloritana,* XXII, 2 (Messina, 1907) 189–190.

belonging to the thirteenth century, may, in the specific case of the ordinations, represent a rubrical tradition that is somewhat older and almost intermediate, even if peripheral, between the *Barberini* euchologion and *Paris Coislin* 213.[36]

4. *In the Middle Ages and Down to the Textus Receptus*

Over the centuries, the Byzantine rituals for ordinations have not undergone any important changes, differing in this respect from the rituals for the other sacraments. This is not to say that from the time of the *Coislin* euchologion to today the rites have remained changeless. The most important fact to note is undoubtedly the gradual disappearance, beginning in the twelfth century, of the ordination of deaconesses. Next to be noted is the general tendency to make the rites similar to one another. Thus the acclamation Ἄξιος, which is found initially only at the ordination of bishops, later becomes part also of presbyteral and diaconal ordinations,[37] while a procession around the altar to the singing of the hymn to the holy martyrs seems, in a factual way, to place ordinations on the same level as the rites of matrimony.[38]

More important changes, however, came about in episcopal ordination by reason of the transfer to the liturgical rite of the canonical examination and corresponding profession of faith that the candidate makes before the ordaining prelate, who confirms the appointment. In the sixties of the fourteenth century, the liturgical and the canonical were still distinct,[39] but as early as around 1380 the profession of faith immediately precedes the Eucharistic liturgy in which the ordination takes place.[40] The profession of faith, which is attested for the first time in the ninth century, almost certainly consisted initially of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed,[41] but then became increasingly more detailed. The formulas for the profession of faith in contemporary euchologia have been found in the works of Gregory II (George of Cyprus), patriarch of Constantinople from 1283 to 1289, who composed

[36] The texts of the ordinations in the euchologion of Grottaferrata are published in Morin, 124–127.

[37] See, e.g., A.Dmitr, 2, 153, Apparatus.

[38] *Gerusalemme Saba* 362 *(607),* 14th cent., ordination of a bishop (A.Dmitr, 2, 300).

[39] In the *De Officiis* of Pseudo-Kodinos (ca. 1350–1360); see Ps.-Kodinos, *Traité des Offices,* ed. E. Verpeaux (Paris, 1966) 277–283.

[40] *Gerusalemme Saba* 362 *(607),* in A.Dmitr, 2, 298–301.

[41] Nicephorus, *Apologeticus minor* (ca. 814): PG 100:841b; *Nicephori Constantinopolitani Archiepiscopi Vita*: PG 100:68c.

them in a climate of controversy between Greeks and Latins that was a reaction to the decrees of the unionist Second Council of Lyons (1274).[42] These formularies entered the *textus receptus* via the euchological compilation of Jacques Goar, who borrowed them from a late Cypriot ms., now known as *Barberini gr.* 390, from the second half of the sixteenth century.[43] Some aspects of episcopal ordination as found in this euchologion in turn influenced the rite of the liturgical installation of an abbot, as likewise happened in the West.[44] After the thirteenth century, the euchologia show a special emphasis on the "Divine grace" formula, connecting it, like the ancient *Barberini gr.* 336, with the laying on of hands.[45]

Among the instituted ministries, advancement to the lectorate in the *textus receptus* displays noteworthy differences between the Greek recension and the Slavic. The former seems more restrained as it follows the *Coislin* euchologion, unlike the latter, which has a previous prayer specifically for clerical tonsure and a short exhortation by the bishop with an eye-catching statement that the lectorate is "the first degree of priesthood."[46] This second rite, too, seems to derive from euchologion *Barberini gr.* 390, but it has older roots, since it is attested in the Coptic, Georgian, and Melkite traditions.[47] We are in the presence here, for the umpteenth time, of an explicit Eastern influence on the Byzantine tradition. This is further confirmed by the fact that one of the first Greek euchologia to carry the formula is *Cairo* 114 of the Alexandrian patriarchate.[48] Along with ordinations according to the Byzantine rite, the editor has kept what was in the euchologia of his local Church prior to Byzantinization; see, for example, the ordination of a chorbishop. From this same euchologion come the rite and prayers for advancement to ecclesiastical dignities such as the archdiaconate and archpresbyterate.[49]

[42] Raquez, "Les confessions de foi," 477–488; see also J. Darrouzes, "Textes synodaux chypriotes," *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 37 (1979) 5–122.

[43] Raquez, "Les confessions de foi," *passim*.

[44] See *Grand Euchologe et Arkhieratikon,* trans. D. Guillaume (Parma, 1992) 450–451.

[45] See P. Trempelas, Μικρόν Εὐχολόγιον, I (Athens, 1950) *passim*.

[46] *Cinovnik' Archierejskago Sviascennosluzenija,* I (Moscow, 1982) 202–205.

[47] Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites,* 243.

[48] A.Dmitr, 2, 344.

[49] Ibid., 344–348.

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12

Ordination and Ministries in the West

The Sacrament of Orders

I. ORDINATIONS IN ROME

Nearly three centuries would have to pass after the *Apostolic Traditions* before a new ordination ritual would appear that would be able both to impose itself on all the previously existing rituals and be able also to accommodate future ferment in such a way as to create, ultimately, a true uniformity of gesture and prayer, within the unity of that which would be called the Roman rite for ordinations.

Many centuries distant in time, our knowledge of that new ritual is reasonably good and complete. This ritual had some important novelties, especially on the level of euchology, thanks to the appearance of three new formulas of consecration that would forever after be characteristic of the Roman rite. The formulas were noteworthy, but their literary and theological value was not all the same. Those for the ordination of presbyter and deacon were very beautiful, while those for the bishop were weak and redundant. Nonetheless, they made a coherent theological statement and were inspired by a vision of the Church that was strongly hierarchical. In a less final way, on the level of gesture, this rite also showed the beginning of what would finally be the prevalent tendency: the desire to say with gestures and symbols what is ineffable about the mystery. That is where we will start.

1. *The Rites for Episcopal Ordination*

The principal sources for the reconstruction of this rite are, other than the sacramentaries, the *Ordines Romani (OR),* liturgical books that contain ceremonial instructions for various rites.[1]

[1] Our concern here is with the following *Ordines (OR): OR XXXIV* (from the first half of the eighth century); *OR* XXXV (from the first half of the tenth century);

The ritual for episcopal ordination was substantially faithful to the oldest traditions, known to us from Hippolytus. It also shows the outline of the framework that would eventually enable it to accommodate the innovations that were making themselves known beyond the Alps.

The rite takes place on Sunday (*OR* XXXIV:32),[2] according to tradition. The rite provides, at its beginning, for a public declaration of the regularity of the election and for the consent of the clergy and the people to the candidate (*OR* XXXIV:38).

According to tradition, which had been sanctioned by the Council of Nicea (canon 4), the ordaining prelates were normally three in number throughout the Catholic community. This was true also in Rome, but only if the one ordaining was one of the suburbicarian bishops or one of the suffragans of the *domnus apostolicus* (*OR* XXXV:66). When the pope celebrated, he acted alone (*OR* XXXIV:40; *OR* XXXVI:37; *OR* XXXV:66). However, while this appears in *OR* XXXIV and *OR* XXXVI simply as a point of information, in *OR* XXXV (from the tenth century) it is presented as a canonically normative principle (*OR* XXXV:65–66).

The rite is preceded by two sessions that take place on the previous Friday and Saturday, the object of which is a threefold examination both of the candidate and of the motives that led his electors to choose him. The examination seeks to ascertain whether the election was canonically regular, whether the electors' choice was free, and whether the candidate is free to accept. In addition, it sought to ascertain the absence of any hint of the vice of simony, the situation of the family and the patrimony of the one aspiring to be a bishop[3], his moral status[4], and his knowledge of doctrine and canon law, etc. (*OR* XXXIV:27–28).

OR XXXVI (from the end of the ninth century); *OR* XXXIX (from the end of the eighth century).

[2] This is the "dies legitimus" of which Leo the Great speaks (*Epist.* 10, "To the bishops of the province of Vienne," ch. 6: PL 54:634): "the only day which our fathers thought worthy of any honor." The apostles' birthdays were also acceptable.

[3] *OR* XXXIV:22 "Has he been married? Has he taken care of his house?" The answer: "He has done so." Later the same question would be posed directly to the candidate.

[4] This was an especially solemn moment. The candidate had to swear on the Gospels that he had never committed one of the four capital sins: homosexuality, sacrilegious fornication (with a nun), bestiality, or adultery.

Theologically more important was the question on his current ministerial status. The candidate could be a deacon or a presbyter but might also belong to any one of the minor orders.[5] In that case, the Roman custom did not require any passage through the various intermediary orders. The one chosen for the diaconate, presbyterate, or episcopacy was ordained directly into his new rank.[6] This is a fact that is of primary importance when considering the doctrine of the sacramentality of the episcopate.

The ordination was introduced by a litany, during which those who would be ordaining, as well as the clergy and the candidates, would prostrate themselves before the altar (*OR* XXXIV:39). There followed the great prayer of blessing, introduced by two lesser prayers. Then would follow the kiss of peace, which the one ordaining gave to the ordinand and which they then exchanged with the bishops and priests present (*OR* XXXIV:41). Immediately thereafter the new prelate was led to his seat, where he took his place *super omnes episcopos* (*OR* XXXIV:42), or *in capite sedium episcoporum* (*OR* XXXV:71). Naturally, the gesture of ordination remained the laying on of hands.

At the moment of communion, the ordaining prelate gave the new bishop the *formata,* the certificate of ordination that set down his pastoral tasks, and also a *sacrata oblatio integra,* an entire loaf of consecrated bread from which he could communicate for forty days after his ordination (*OR* XXXIV:44). The rites ended at this point. Since this took place in Rome, there was no need to focus on the rite whereby the new bishop took possession of his see. These rites were described with considerable emphasis in the *ordines* from the parts of Europe that lay beyond the Alps.

2. *The Ordination of the Presbyter and the Deacon*

These rites also adhered closely to the model of the *Apostolic Tradition,* preserving a notable simplicity in the gestures and rites. They retained, and seemed even to accentuate, the ecclesial nature of the celebrations

[5] *OR* XXXIV:22, 27 "What is his rank *(honor)*?" The answer: "Deacon, Presbyter, or whatever else might be the case." Question: "How many years has he been a deacon, or presbyter?" The answer: "So many as has been the case." For more on this issue see the fundamental work of Michel Andrieu, *Les ordines romani du haut moyen âge,* Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense (Louvain, 1931) 3:560–569.

[6] However, things began to change in Frankish territory in the ninth century, around 869 or 870. Hincmar of Rheims, *Epist.* 29, "To Adventius, Bishop of Metz," 2: PL 126:186–188.

and the ministries they conferred. Ordinations were celebrated in the midst of the community assembled around its bishop. However, the differences are not without a certain significance.[7]

First of all, ordinations were to be celebrated on the Saturdays of the Ember Days, during the vigil for Sunday.[8] These ordinations also were preceded by public meetings that served both to evaluate the candidates and to present them to the people.

Every priest was ordained for a *titulus*.[9] The gesture of ordination was, here as well, the laying on of hands, which the ordaining prelate did on each candidate individually *(singillatim)*. In the ordination of the presbyter, the entire college of presbyters present also laid on hands.[10] On the other hand, in the ordination of a deacon, only the celebrant laid on hands (*OR* XXXV:27–28).

The deacon or presbyter was clothed in his liturgical vestments in front of the altar. Both received the *orarium*[11] (*stola* in the French churches) and the *planeta*.[12]

At the end of the ordination rites, the new presbyter took a seat *supra omnes presbyteros* (*OR* XXXIX:24).

At communion, the presbyter, just like the bishop, received a *sacrata oblatio integra* (consecrated bread), from which he communicated for eight days (*OR* XXXVI:32; forty days according to *OR* XXXIX:25).

The entrance of the presbyter into his *titulus* was a solemn occasion that imitated, even if in a modest fashion, a bishop taking possession of his see.[13] The presbyter traveled on horseback, and was introduced and presented by a functionary called *paranymphus*.[14] Having entered

[7] The principal sources are *OR* XXXIV, *OR* XXXVI, and *OR* XXXIX.

[8] Andrieu, *OR,* 3:556; I. H. Dalmais, "Time in the Liturgy," in *The Church at Prayer,* ed. A.-G. Martimort (Collegeville, Minn.) 4:28–29.

[9] *OR* XXXIX:19: *Talis presbyter, regionis tertiae, titulo tali, Ille.*

[10] *OR* XXXVI:18. In this instance as well, if the ordaining prelate was the bishop of Rome, he did this by himself.

[11] According to *OR* XXXVI:19, the stole placed on the shoulder of the deacon would have been placed on the altar of ordination and allowed to remain there since the previous day.

[12] *OR* XXXVI:20. The *planeta* and the *orarium* are called *diaconalia indumenta* in this source. Later the names, shapes, and manner of wearing them would change.

[13] *OR* XXXVI:28; *OR* XXXIX:26–31.

[14] *OR* XXXIX:26–28. The term comes from contemporary popular marriage rituals and means something like "groomsman," that is, the male attendant of the groom at a wedding.

his church, the presbyter would sing his first Mass there. For this occasion only he was allowed to intone the *Gloria* outside the Easter season and also to place his chair beside the altar.[15]

In succeeding centuries many new things would be added to this Roman foundation of the ordination ritual. Coming from the parts of Europe beyond the Alps or even the Pyrenees, they were received in Rome with a great deal of caution until, thanks to the weighty synthesis created by the Romano-German Pontifical of the tenth century, these new elements would enter history and become definitively known as the Roman ordination ritual.

II. THE ORDINATION PRAYERS

These prayers may go back as far as the fifth century and are associated with the name of Saint Leo the Great. Whatever the truth of this attribution might be, it is certain that the great regard which they have enjoyed up to our own day is not explained simply by the intrinsic merit of the formulas themselves. If it is the case that the regard which the prayers for the presbyter and deacon have enjoyed seems to be well merited, the one for the bishop seems inadequate for the mystery it is called to express. This is so true that the Pontifical of Vatican II has preferred to return to the prayer of Hippolytus.

1. *The Blessing of the Bishop*[16]

The beginning is solemn and worthy of a Roman anaphora. God is the author of all honors and dignities, which he dispenses for the glory of his name.

There follows a prolix dissertation on the priestly vestments of Aaron, signs and sacraments of the real dignity of the pastor of the new covenant, the bishop. This dignity is an interior disposition, whose gold and precious stones consist of the virtues and good witness of the candidate.

[15] *Et cum pervenerit ad ecclesiam, ponitur sedes latus altaris et habet ibi licentiam sedere eodem die et in vigilia paschae tantum et dicere Gloria in excelsis* (*OR* XXXIX:27). Sufficient note of the placement of the chair is not ordinarily taken.

[16] We prefer this term to the other two *(consecratio, ordinatio)* because it corresponds better to the literary genre of the prayer of consecration. It is a real *eulogia,* an anaphora. The three terms are used interchangeably in the oldest traditions of the Roman and Western liturgy, even if in the oldest documents the term *consecratio* is certainly preferred to refer to the prayer of ordination. The terms became specialized only with the scholastics.

The epiclesis, the invocation of the gift of the Spirit as the heavenly ointment that sanctifies the Lord's chosen, is the central and "essential" moment of the prayer. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit constitutes the *mysterii tua summa,* able to pervade the heart, mind, and actions of God's minister.[17]

The prayer then moves quickly to its conclusion, invoking episcopal authority for the candidate, expressed by means of the metonymy of the *cathedra: tribuas eis cathedram episcopalem,* because he is worthy and capable of governing the Church of God and the people entrusted to him.[18] Constancy in faith, purity in love, a sincere spirit of peace—these are the gifts that are requested for him. God himself will be his authority, his strength, his power. He, the candidate, will never tire of imploring God's mercy for himself and his people.

The better moments of this prayer are those when the Eucharistic model on which it is based is clearest. However, its shortcomings are neither few nor of little import.[19] These gaps or shortcomings caused there to be inserted into the Roman sacramentaries a series of intercessions that were intended to fill them. Among these is the *Sint speciosi,* which is probably a fragment of a Gallican ordination prayer that is otherwise lost. This prayer invokes, in greater detail, the gifts, powers, and virtues that are an integral part of the bishop's commission.

This is not so much an original composition as it is a collage of New Testament texts that results in an image of the pastor who is zealous, solicitous, modest, strong, minister of the word and reconciliation, one who preaches the gospel of peace, a minister with full

[17] . . . *ut tui spiritus virtus et interiora horum repleat et exteriora circumtegat.*

[18] For the various interpretations of the passage, see A. Santantoni, *L'ordinazione episcopale: Storia e teologia dei riti dell'ordinazione nelle antiche liturgie dell'Occidente, SA* 69 = AL 2 (Rome, 1976) 59–60.

[19] The defects are of various types: the excessive length given to the symbolism of the priesthood of Aaron and his priestly vestments; the brief mention given to traditional functions of the bishop, above all preaching; the fact that the episcopate is not placed in the context of salvation history; the strange lack of any mention of the humanity of Christ and his anointing in the Holy Spirit; finally, the truly singular lack of coherence between the first part of the prayer, where a priestly typology predominates, and the second, which principally stresses the mission of the bishop as guide, shepherd, and head of his people. One might add to the list the lack of relation between the episcopate and the other ranks of orders. Finally, there is no clear reference to the powers and duties of the episcopate in the three principal roles of the office: evangelization, governance, and sanctification.

power to open and close, to loose and to bind in the Lord's house. He is a pastor who forgives sins or retains them, who never sacrifices truth because of fear or laziness, who does not play fast and loose with ideas in order to call good what is evil or to call evil what is good, the false what is true or the true what is false, who knows how to be for all people, friend and foe alike, indebted to the gospel, as the Apostle was. The Lord has made him head of his household so that he might govern it with care and so that all people might find there the food of life.

A word should be said about the metaphor of the *cathedra episcopalis.* This is the great era of the Byzantine and Romanesque basilicas. The apses of these churches are marked by a clear delineation of simple seats for the clergy, in the center of which is the bishop's cathedra, right under the ceiling of the apse, dominated as it was by an image of the enthroned Christ, an empty throne, a throne upon which lay a book, the Pantocrator or the Theotokos. Under this throne, seemingly a part of it, was the seat or cathedra of the bishop, the vicar of Christ, successor of the Apostles. Around the cathedra were the stalls for the clergy and, in front of the people, at the center of the altar, was Christ. This was a perfect icon, or image, of the Church and its mystery.

2. *The Blessing of the Priest*

This is certainly the most precise and "geometrically" perfect of the three prayers in the Verona Sacramentary. It shows the whole route that has been traveled from the first apostolic writings right up to the fifth and sixth centuries. Its elegant and well-expressed typology introduces a theology of the presbyterate that also sheds light on that of the episcopate.

These are the central ideas of the anaphora of blessing.

The episcopate appears as the source and summit, the origin and fullness of the sacred ministry. It is complete in itself and is not dependent for meaning on any of the other ranks of orders. The presbyterate, however, would be incomprehensible without the episcopate, to which it relates in an essential way: *ad eorum societatis et operis adiumentum sequentis ordinis viros et secundae dignitatis elegeris.*[20] The typology is impeccable and complete: the seventy elders of Moses

[20] Santantoni, *L'ordinazione episcopale,* 62.

(for governance); the sons of Aaron (for the priestly ministry); the coworkers of the Apostles (for the ministry of preaching). Presbyters are, therefore, an aid to the bishops in their ministry. They represent for these latter *societatis et operis adiumentum,* they receive a *secundi ministerii munus* that makes them *cooperatores ordinis nostri* (that is, of the bishops). With its allusive language, the typology reinforces the same message: whether one speaks of the seventy elders with Moses, or the sons of Aaron, or the *secundi praedicatores* of the Apostles—all this is assistance given to the bishop, under the guidance of the bishop, in communion of action and of life *(societatis et operis)* with the bishop.

The intention of the prayer, then, is quite clear. The threefold *munus* of the presbyterate has the same extension as that of the bishop: in his church, the bishop is the pastor, the guide, the head, the priest, the master. Next to him are the presbyters, who help him in all his tasks and who participate, thanks to the bishop, in the grace of "his" spirit.[21]

One thing needs to be stressed. In these prayers there is no mention of the mediation and redemption of Christ, who is mentioned only indirectly in the phrase "the apostles of your Son." Is this merely a strange coincidence with the formula for episcopal blessing, or are they both betraying a common set of symptoms?

The formula reaches its peak in the epiclesis with which it invokes the *presbyterii dignitatem* upon the candidates. It is difficult to express what is meant by the central words: *innova in visceribus eorum spiritum sanctitatis,* which the Italian *editio typica* of the new Roman Pontifical translates (and in so doing both clarifies and changes the concept) "renew in them the outpouring of your Spirit of holiness" (no. 146).

The prayer ends with an invocation upon the new presbyters for the strength of a witness which will serve as an example and exhortation to the flock, and which will, in the good service given, secure for them the prize for which they hope.

3. *The Blessing of the Deacon*

The prayer of the Verona for the blessing of the deacon locates the diaconate in the area of liturgy and worship, underplaying the ministry of charity completely. This had already been proposed by the *Apostolic Tradition.*

[21] Ibid., 63–64.

The entire prayer is centered on this idea, so much so that it forms the very stuff of which it is made.[22] It opens with the usual, noble completeness of the first anamnesis, in which is recalled God's providential plan of salvation; then it weaves in the typological threads that define the proper character of the ministry of the deacon. It is the only formula in the Verona in which the centrality of the role of Jesus Christ is clearly and explicitly recognized in relation to the ministry. In the Church, his Body, mysteriously one in the diversity of its gifts and of its members, the holy temple of God grows and expands (a concept already present in Hippolytus).

The three ranks of the ministry in the Church serve this mystery. Among them, that of the Levites, destined for the "mystical actions of your house," is, as a consequence, called to a glorious inheritance in the hope of an eternal reward.

The anamnesis is the most explicit and direct of the three in the Verona. The clarity of its conceptual and mystical content is superior. The Holy Spirit is invoked directly, by the use of his name and without metaphor, as the grace that gives strength, as the sevenfold gift that feeds the various ministries of the Church.

The final section is given over to intercession for those virtues which the ordinand will need in the exercise of his office, but which God alone can give him, and to the desire that his life will be such that he will merit advancement in his ecclesial ministry.

Even a minimal reading of the history leaves us with these facts:

In the sixth and seventh centuries, the sacrament of orders appears to have been divided into three grades or orders (episcopate, presbyterate, diaconate), which were conferred in three distinct rites that were liturgically rather similar and theologically concrete: election is principally the task of the clergy, the people are called to give their assent, every ordination is a sacramental action of the bishop, all the bishops impose hands on the new bishop, the presbyters who are present impose hands along with the bishop on the one being ordained presbyter, only the ordaining bishop imposes hands on the one being ordained deacon. The prayer of ordination is preceded by

[22] *Quos ad officium levitarum vocare digneris, altaris sancti ministerium tribuas sufficienter implere* (*Ve* 950); *electis ab initio Leviti filiis, qui misticis operationibus* (*Ve* 951); *quos tuis sacrariis servituros in officium diaconii dedicamus* (ibid.) All the intercessions in the anaphora refer to the sanctity of the exercise of this service.

one or two introductory prayers, and eventually by an invitatory. The ordination is followed by the kiss of peace and by the installation *in ordine suo;* in the remainder of the liturgy the one who has been ordained functions according to the rank now proper to him. At the end the bishop and the presbyter take possession, respectively, of their cathedral or *titulus.*

We are far removed from the apostolic age, when presbyter and bishop were near synonyms and could refer to the same person. Now the roles are clearly distinct. The bishop now has pride of place in all things, while the presbyter comes only second. Despite the fact that he has extensive powers and that, on the sacramental level, they are nearly the same as the bishop's, with the exception of being able to ordain, there is a fundamental difference in the title that is basic to all these powers. The bishop possesses powers that derive from the Apostles themselves, and ultimately from Christ. The presbyter, on the other hand, exists in an essential relationship with a bishop. He exists in order to help the bishop, and all his power derives from his participation in the bishop's powers.

Is this merely a problem of terminology? Or is it a normal process of the development of a truth that was present *in nuce* from the beginning? Or is it a real evolution of practices and terms taken from the New Testament, which can take a faithful yet fresh look at ancient structures, moving beyond the letter in order to obey the spirit which gives them life?

It is a serious problem, about which the debate is not yet ended but which cannot be ended by a simple call to fidelity and obedience to tradition and to the magisterium. More often than it gives definitive answers, the liturgy shows directions for further reflection and investigation.

III. THE RITES OF ORDINATION IN THE NON-ROMAN WESTERN LITURGIES (SIXTH TO TENTH CENTURIES)

The sobriety of the Roman rite was not certain to meet with unconditional success beyond the Alps, where there was a preference for longer, richer, and more complex rituals, for more gestures and prayers, than was the case in the Eternal City. In Isidore's Spain, in the Gaul of Gennadius or Caesarius of Arles, in the Neustria of Hincmar, in the Rheims of Amalarius, and later of the Ottos, there was born and developed an attitude toward ritual that was more at home with a

livelier religiosity more connected with previous religious customs and tradition and, most importantly, less preoccupied with theological subtlety and doctrinal and political implications. The Gregorian Hadrian Sacramentary *(GrH)* and its *Supplementum (GrS)* are most eloquent testimony to this.

We cannot recover all the movements and currents that would eventually flow together into what would be called the Roman liturgy. We will limit ourselves merely to recording, by time period and by geographical region, the new touches which, after the kiss and the installation, would come to enrich and finally render more meaningful the primitive, austere, yet at the same time, fruitful gesture of the laying on of hands.

What is most striking, in this connection, is the extraordinary profusion of rites, symbols, and gestures of the most diverse sorts, which, in a fairly short period, came to be associated with a ritual that had remained nearly unchanged for some six or seven centuries. An analysis of the rites, the symbols, and the historical circumstances that accompanied their origin and diffusion will allow us to better evaluate the value and limits of their theology.

On the one hand, it was necessary to give some iconic form to new power relationships and also to the legal boundaries between religious and civil powers. On the other hand, there was a need to define in an ever clearer fashion the hierarchical relations in the ecclesial community. All this took place in the context of a civilization that has rightly been called "a civilization of the gesture" (in the sense that a gesture, once made, could have the force of *ius condendum*[23]). In this context a multiplication of gestures, which had the immediate and declared intent of better defining the nature of the ministry that was being conferred, may well also have worked to fix hierarchical relationships and guarantee arbitrary and reductive interpretations. This may, perhaps, not be assumed as an absolute, valid in all cases, but in the long run it will be just this tendency and this need that will determine the adoption of a new symbol and the birth of a new rite.

1. *The Auxiliary Rites of the Episcopal Ordination*

No other sacrament, with the exception of the Eucharist and baptism, has known the spectacular flowering of new gestures and new symbols as has the rite of episcopal ordination.

[23] See the excellent study of J. C. Schmitt, *Gestures* (London, 1984).

a) The imposition of the book of the Gospels

The rite originated in the East. Toward the end of the sixth century it is reported for the first time in the *Apostolic Constitutions*,[24] the apocryphal Syriac work that has exerted such an influence on later Eastern tradition. Toward the end of the following century the rite had already crossed the sea and landed, by different routes, in Rome and in the south of Gaul, where we find it in two different traditions, one Roman and one Gallican.[25]

However, beyond the agreement in gesture and symbol, there are also notable differences between the two western traditions and the original. In Syria, the gesture is made by deacons on all of the episcopal ordinands, while in Gaul the codex is carried by two bishops.[26] In Rome, it is borne by deacons but only upon the head of the bishop of Rome, because in the apostolic city the gesture is reserved for the ordination of the pope.[27]

This was probably both an anti-diaconal statement and an exclusively papal claim staked on a gesture with powerful symbolic impact. This is a dual example of the way in which a rite may be "used" in order to achieve a "political" aim that is not entirely theological. In the ninth century there will be a repetition. While allowing for an extension of the rite to all episcopal ordinations, *OR* XXXV:64, there is a conscious move to save something for the pope to underline the unique nature of his prerogatives and his mandate. The solution was to have the codex open for the bishop of Rome but closed for others. However, this attempt, sterile and artificial as it was, did not have a long life.[28]

The meaning of the gesture is transparently clear. Since it accompanies the laying on of hands, it emphasizes the epicletic nature of the

[24] I, VIII, 4, 6: "In silence, one of the most worthy bishops stands near the altar with the other two, while the other bishops and presbyters pray in silence and the deacons hold the holy Gospels open on the head of the one who is being ordained. . . ."

[25] *OR* XL A:5. Although the manuscript tradition is later, the ritual may be placed in the sixth century (Cf. Andrieu *OR*, 4:294.).

[26] *Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua*, 90. Munier sees in this difference an anti-diaconal polemic on the part of the author of the compilation, the presbyter Gennadius of Marseilles. This custom is also found in *PRG* LXIII:31 and *OR* XXXV A:8 and *OR* XXXV B:24.

[27] *OR* XL A:5; *OR* XL B:5.

[28] We find it in *OR* XXXV B:24 and in the corresponding section of *PRG* XCIII:31.

gesture. In the Syrian-Jacobite rite the Gospel book is open to Luke 4:18 (that is, Isaiah 61:1): "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." In the Pontifical of Durandus it is accompanied by a brief formula: *Accipe Spiritum Sanctum.*[29]

The anointing of the head and the singing of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus (PGD)* or the *Veni Creator Spiritus* (*PR* 1595) give a later confirmation (however superfluous) of the meaning of the rite of the imposition of the book of the Gospels.[30]

b) The traditio *of the book of the Gospels*

The book of the Gospels has a leading role in another rite in which it is handed over *(traditio)* to the newly consecrated bishop. This is a relatively new rite (ninth or tenth century) that was French in origin but was immediately extremely successful. After some uncertainty about where it should be placed, the medieval Roman Pontifical and the Pontifical of Durandus gave it a final position—after the handing over of the pastoral staff and the ring. The celebrant takes the book from the shoulders of the new bishop and gives it to him with the words "Take the book of the Gospels and go. Preach to the people who have been given to you. . . ."[31]

c) The traditio *of the pastoral staff*

This is one of the oldest and most prestigious of the complementary (or auxiliary, according to the term preferred today) rites of the episcopal ordination. The earliest symbolic interpretation is offered by Isidore of Seville († 636). It will remain the classic statement, despite some secondary variations.[32]

This was originally a civil and/or military sign of honor that began to be associated with the episcopate when bishops became numbered among the *illustres,* or principal citizens. The new rite also bore civil meaning from the realm of investiture because, along with the ring, it was part of the act with which the *honor,* that is, the right of rule, over a new fief or a city with its attendant territory, was conferred on a

[29] *PGD* I, 14, 30.

[30] For a collection of texts, see Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 269–272.

[31] *PR* XII, 10, 29; *PR* XIII, 11, 30; *PGD* I, 14, 43. For the texts, see Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 272–273.

[32] In 663, the Fourth Council of Toledo already so honored this gesture, as well as that of the giving of the ring and the stole, that it prescribed its repetition in the case of a bishop who was deposed.

vassal. *Accipe episcopatum* (in reference to the staff), *accipe ecclesiam* (in reference to the ring). This appears almost blasphemous to us today, but it encountered no resistance among the theologians and canonists of the time, at least up until the end of the struggle over investiture. With these words, and the giving of the signs relative to them, the sovereign (or the *dominus*) intended to confer civil authority, and this was clear to all. However, with a change in the political conditions, that which had appeared mild could suddenly bear grave consequences.

In every case the pastoral staff maintained, as a liturgical and pontifical sign, its original connotation. It was, and remains, a sign of authority and rule: *sacri regiminis signum*,[33] the shepherd's rod with which the flock of God is moved along the straight way. It is also a symbol that comforts the pastor in his difficult mission. The *PR* 1595 calls for it to be blessed with holy water.

d) The imposition of the ring

The story of this sign is parallel to that of the staff insofar as its ecclesial and political vicissitudes and complications are concerned. However, the history of its symbolism may be divided into two neatly distinct stages.

Isidore of Seville is, once again, the first to mention it in connection with a mystical interpretation. The ring may be seen as a mark of social and political distinction, a signet ring, with which its bearers seal and authenticate their documents and correspondence. Isidore sees in the right to bear this sign the expression of a priestly power, which allows or denies the sacraments, opens or closes access to the mysteries of the Word and of the faith.

However, between the seventh and ninth centuries a new symbolism developed and made progress in the northern European countries. In this case the ring was not only seen as a pledge of betrothal *(arrha)* but came to be connected with the rite of marriage itself, serving as a symbol of mutual conjugal fidelity. This dense symbolism could not help but be applied to the same symbol when adopted as a sign of episcopacy. The bishop became, thanks to this symbol, the keeper of the bride of Christ, the Church, in which he himself became a partici-

[33] The *PRG* takes the definition from Hincmar of Rheims. See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 157–159, 274–277.

pant. In some mystical fashion he, too, partook of this nuptial mystery and became the spouse of "his" church. This would in turn lead to the long period (up until the ninth century at least) in which it was not licit for a bishop to change dioceses lest he commit the sin of "adultery."

The two symbolisms existed together for a long time; the former would continue to prevail in Spain while the latter was taken up in France. The *PRG* accepts both. The medieval English tradition prefers a different approach in which faith (the theological virtue) and fidelity (the moral virtue) tend to coincide and prevail. Rome would ultimately prefer the nuptial symbolism and would impose it on the Latin West.[34]

e) The rites of anointing

It is a wonder that so many centuries would pass without a rite of anointing coming to be developed, given that the image of the messianic anointing had, since the time of Hippolytus, given special meaning to the epiclesis of the consecration. This is especially true in regard to the Verona Sacramentary, which speaks of the "heavenly anointing" that comes down upon the one ordained *ut interiora repleat ex exteriora circumtegat.*

f) The anointing of the hands

The first anointing to be practiced is that for the hands of the presbyter. We have a witness in the *Missale Francorum* (eighth century). A few decades later the Gelasian Sacramentary of the eighth century has already inserted it into the rite for the ordination of a bishop. In the same period there appears the anointing in the rite of consecration for the King of the Franks (Pepin the Short, ca. 751.)

The anointing of the hands is eminently priestly and is intended to make the hands of the bishop worthy of "sacrificing the sacrifice of praise and of celebrating and administering all of the sacraments of the Church" (Pontifical of Vich XLVI:6) and proper for blessing and sanctifying (*PRG* LXIII:37).[35]

For this reason the anointing of the hands has had a strange development in the history of ritual. Born as a presbyteral rite, it was also

[34] See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 151–155; 160–162; 276–279.

[35] This is the same idea expressed by Amalarius of Trier in *Liber officialis,* II, 13, 1: ed. J. M. Hanssens, *Amalarii episcopi opera liturgica omni,* ST 138 (Vatican City, 1948) 226–227.

practiced on the hands of those who came to the episcopate directly from the diaconate.[36] This is clear in *OR* XXXV:69: "the hands are consecrated, if they are not already consecrated." Strictly speaking this could also refer to a presbyter ordained without the rite of anointing. This could have been the case with a Roman presbyter ordained before the tenth century, given that the rite had only recently been introduced into the Apostolic City. Were that the case, the rite would have had a short lifetime, whereas, on the contrary, it changed and took on new life. "This is owed to the fact that, with the passage of time, the anointing of the hands of the bishop took on a meaning that was more markedly episcopal . . . being the anointing of the pontiff who alone could perform certain rites and gestures and who needed, therefore, a special consecration. . . . The bishop accomplished with his hands, in particular with the thumb, signs and gestures that were proper to him."[37]

The formula of *PRG* LXIII:37 is explicit about the reason when it says "the imposition of this hand or of this thumb is an aid for the salvation of all."[38] The new pontifical has suppressed, opportunely, the rite in question.

g) The anointing of the head

This is the real pontifical anointing, which is called for directly by the formula of ordination and marks the difference from the presbyterate. It is the messianic anointing par excellence, prefigured in the royal and prophetic anointing of David (Pontifical of Angers), which makes one part of the pontifical order (*PRG* XLIII:5), vicar of Christ (Amalarius), *sacerdos magnus* (Ambrosian Pontifical), participant in the high priesthood of Christ (*PR* 1968).

This rite broke up the unity of the prayer of ordination[39] (followed as it was by the singing of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus (PGD),* later replaced by the *Veni Creator Spiritus*). The Pontifical of 1968 suppressed the chant but maintained the anointing.

[36] This was also the custom for some time in Rome, but Hincmar of Rheims tells us that in his time (in the second half of the ninth century), it was already the custom that a deacon elected to the episcopate was first ordained to the presbyterate.

[37] Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 169–170.

[38] For the texts, see Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 281–284.

[39] This is clearest in the Pontifical of Sens: . . . *flore sanctifica. Hic fundatur Xrisma super caput.*

h) The imposition of the miter

The medieval Roman pontifical made room for the rite of the imposition of the miter, originally the head-covering for the pope, later bestowed upon bishops, abbots, and even lay dignitaries,[40] from the time when the pope reserved for himself the *regnum,* or *tiara* or *corona.* The Pontifical of Durandus gives a theological-symbolic interpretation suggested by the name itself: it was the head-covering of the high priest Aaron, which still exalts with its splendor the dignity of the bishop, his antitype. Even his gloves were blessed, but the allegory by the bishop of Mende in this instance reached a new height in contrivance.[41]

i) The enthronement

The rite of enthronement had many models from which to borrow: religious (the enthronement of the pope) and civil (the enthronement of the sovereign, the feudal lord, etc.). The bishop was normally consecrated in some church other than the cathedral, to which he processed after the rite of ordination with a solemn cavalcade in which the entire city participated: the nobility, the clergy and, naturally, the people. The Roman pontificals speak of it only after the thirteenth century, when they begin to propose it as normative for the entire Latin Church. They had previously only been interested in the enthronement or coronation of the bishop of Rome. On the contrary, the success of the rite in France and in the English tradition is noteworthy.

The formulas for the enthronement are relatively numerous, and not especially interesting either in terms of their theology or beauty.[42] These prayers go beyond the intention of the gesture to sum up the entire saving plan of God, touching on the Old Testament, on Moses, on Aaron, on Samuel. This plan was fulfilled in Christ, who promised twelve thrones to his Apostles, and by extension to the bishops who are their successors. On these seats, upon which the Apostle had sat in a mystical fashion, their successors are seated today *ad instar apostolorum.*[43] The *cathedra* is raised up to the status of a *thrónos.* Other prayers

[40] For the history of the miter, see Andrieu, *OR,* 4:169–184.

[41] *PGD,* I, 14, 56, 59–60.

[42] See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 187–189. For the texts, see ibid., 291–295.

[43] *PRG* LXII:5. This is also found in the Pontifical of Moissac (tenth or eleventh century). See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 291–292.

ask for the *benedictionem et apostolatum* on the bishop who has been enthroned.[44] It is clear that the dominant symbolism connected to the throne is that of governance and discipline.

2. *The Auxiliary Rites of Presbyteral Ordination*

In comparison with the ordination of the bishop, the rituals associated with the ordination of the presbyter showed none of the spectacular flourishing of auxiliary rites. There were essentially three: the anointing of the hands, the clothing in the priestly vestments, and the bestowal of the *instrumenta* (the chalice and the paten, with the offerings appropriate to each).

Concerning the anointing of the hands: It appeared in France in the eighth century, and was done after the consecration.[45] The presbyter presented himself vested as a deacon. After the ordination the stole, which had been placed only on the left shoulder, was placed on both shoulders and crossed on the chest (the bishop allowed it to hang straight), and the chasuble was placed on the dalmatic. The prayers do not shine, and their tendency to allegorize is foreign to the mystery.

The bestowal of the paten and chalice merits special mention, especially because of future theological developments. This would take the place of the laying on of hands as the matter, that is, the essential gesture *(materia)* of the ordination of the presbyter. The Council of Florence, in 1439, would give official sanction to this new doctrine.[46] Later variations are of little interest for this work.

3. *The Auxiliary Rites for the Diaconal Ordination*

The developments in the ritual for the ordination of deacons are even more modest and are limited to liturgical vestments and the giving of the Gospel book as the essential gesture *(materia)* of the ordination. These rites appear in their nearly definitive form in the Romano-German Pontifical of the tenth century.[47]

The deacon comes to the altar vested in a dalmatic. After the prayer of ordination, he is revested with a stole that had been previously blessed. Having received the stole (a term of French origin which

[44] These formulas are to be noted in Spain, France, and England. See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 293.

[45] *Missale Francorum,* VIII, 8, 33; *PRG* XVI:35.

[46] *Decretum pro Armenis,* DS 1326.

[47] *PRG* 16, 11, 14a–17.

refers to the Roman *orarium*), he is given the Gospel book with "the authority to read it in the Church of God, both for the living and for the dead" (*PRG* XVI:17).

For the blessing of the deacon, the *Missale Francorum* and the Old Gelasian record, one after the other, without any confusion or conflation of the two, both the formulas for the Roman rite and those for the Gallican (an *ad consummandum diaconatus officium,* or invitation to common prayer for those who are about to take up the office of deacon, and a *benedictio sequitur,* probably "consecratory prayers from an old Gallican ritual"[48]). We should take special notice of the mention of the seven deacons of Jerusalem. The mention suffices to transcend the liturgical dimension of the diaconate, to embrace all the forms of service that may be rendered in the Church. The deacon's ministry is mystically linked with that of the angels.

It is not possible, given the limitations of space, to speak about everything, but some mention should be made of the rich and profound tradition of the Masses *in natale episcoporum praesbiterorum/diaconorum,* which constitute a rich source of spirituality and information on the development of the theology and ecclesiology of the ministries.[49]

IV. THE MINISTRY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME

This is a subject which, in general, liturgical manuals do not treat. In our opinion, this is a mistake. If it is true that this is in the realm of the sacrament of ordination for the bishop, it is also true that the peculiarities of this rite are such that its study does more than merely throw some light on a chapter of the history of ritual. It also touches on sacramental theology, ecclesiology, and even canon law.

1. *The Ordination*

We have no knowledge of any specific peculiarities in the rite of ordination for the bishop of Rome prior to the sixth and seventh centuries. However, from that moment on, novelties became ever more numerous and changes ever more profound. Here we will limit ourselves to

[48] P. Jounel, "Ordinations," in A.-G. Martimort, ed., *The Church at Prayer* (Collegeville, Minn., 1992) 3:166.

[49] See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 68–72, for references to the episcopate in the Verona. For medieval texts for the anniversaries see: for the deacon, *PRG* XVIII, pp. 37–38; for the presbyter, *PRG* XIX, p. 38; for the bishop, *PRG* LXVIII–LXX, pp. 242–244.

listing them, convinced that even this will render a precious service to ongoing theological reflection.

These, in their order of appearance, are the first peculiarities[50] of the ancient rite:

The pope is always ordained by the bishops of three of the suburbicarian sees: Albano, Porto, and Ostia (*OR* XL A:3, 4, 6). It is only in the rite for the ordination of the pope that the imposition of the Gospel book (*OR* XL A:5; *OR* XXXVI:44) is done with the book open (*OR* XL A:5). This is more noteworthy when one notes that elsewhere (in the East and in Gaul) the rite is carried out in this fashion for all ordinands. Just after the pope has been ordained, the pallium is bestowed on him (*OR* XL A:7). Later it will be bestowed on all metropolitans.

The Gregorian Sacramentary (eighth century) introduces a change in the formula of consecration that is of capital importance when compared with the version in the Verona: ". . . and therefore, give grace, O Lord, to this your servant whom you have chosen to be bishop of the Apostolic See, primate of all of the priests of the world, doctor of your Church throughout the world, whom you have chosen for the ministry of high priest. Give him the pontifical cathedra, so that he might guide your Church and all your people *(plebem universam)*" (*GrH* 226). In the eighth century the Pontifical of the Roman Curia will go further: *plebs universa* will become *plebem tuae sortis intra mundi limites universam.*

This preoccupation is at the base of many of the singularities in the rite of papal ordination, as is also the case with what is excluded from that rite. The ring is given to the newly ordained pope specifically so that the one chosen may guard the purity (of heart) of the mystical spouse, the holy and universal Church of God. The people to whom he is to preach the gospel that has been given to him is the *populo universo.* The pallium placed upon him signifies the *plenitudinem pontificalis officii.* The acclamations call for a long life for the *summo pontifici et universali papae.* As he sits on the throne at the door of Saint Peter's Basilica, in front of the people who acclaim him, he removes the miter and dons the *regnum,* or the crown.

The unique prerogatives of the pope of Rome are also evident in the exclusion of rites that appear in the ordinations of all other bishops. For example, the one who has been elected pope is not subjected to

[50] The sources are the *Liber diurnus* and *OR* XL A. *OR* XXXVI agrees with them.

the preliminary examination, and no formulas are read over him.[51] Especially different is the fact that the pope is not given the pastoral staff, a sign too compromised by its political meaning for the investiture.[52] The pope had a staff unique to himself, the *ferula,* a sort of cross in the form of the Greek letter tau, without a crucifix.[53]

The canonists of the period saw in the cross the equivalent of the scepter, and its upright form indicated the direct derivation of the pope's divine investiture. Papal authority recognized no other, neither earthly nor heavenly, and so possessed a superiority of range and of power.

But the moment in which the new papal consciousness of absolute and unlimited authority was manifested most tellingly and expressively in the conclusion of the rite of enthronement and coronation. Here it will not be possible to do anything more than describe it in a summary fashion. However, reference will be made to the sources.[54]

2. *The* Benedictio Papae de Episcopo Facti

In liturgical history this really is something "new under the sun." This novelty began to occur, with some difficulties,[55] some even violent[56] toward the end of the ninth century. In succeeding centuries it became more frequent, then almost normal, until it was finally standard practice, although never codified. What we are referring to is the election of a bishop, already ordained as the ordinary of some see, as bishop of Rome.

What would have appeared as unbridled ambition, something suspiciously like simony, a real "adultery" on the mystical-sacramental

[51] The verse *Episcoporum oportet,* the invitatory *Oremus dilectissimi* (found in the *Ordo Gregorii X*).

[52] The head of the staff, curving back upon itself, was regarded by contemporary canonists and liturgists as a symbol of an authority that was received by delegation, and hence not absolute.

[53] See Santantoni, *La ordinazione episcopale,* 155–156. For an earlier treatment, see also P. Salmon, "La 'ferula' baton pastorale de l'évêque de Rome," *RSR* 30 (1956) 313-327.

[54] *PR* XIII; *Ordo Gregorii X*. See especially the introductory note by M. Andrieu (*PR* 2:263–288).

[55] *Summus namque pontifex, quando benedicitur, eligitur unus ex cardinalibus . . . tantum ut a praedecessore sit pontifice ordinatus aut presbiter aut diaconus, nam episcopus esse non poterit* (*OR* XXXVI:40). The final condition fell out in the eleventh century.

[56] One thinks of what happened after the death of Pope Formosus (891–896).

level, became frequent enough by the eleventh century to necessitate an ad hoc ritual, one without an ordination contained within it. The Roman pontifical, beginning in the twelfth century, includes an order for the *Benedictio papae de episcopo facti* (that is, a blessing for a pope who is already a bishop), leaving out the rites of ordination, giving three prayers (so maintaining the traditional number of bishop celebrants) which ask for a grace to make suitable the one who has been elected for his new and most weighty ministry.

The three formulas are noteworthy because they contain a sort of *summa* of the most recent developments in theology and canon law on papal primacy.

The expressions that become fixed in the liturgy "are not only the isolated and improbable fruit of some Roman thinker. They are, rather, the result, or better, a summary, of the historical developments of recent centuries."[57]

The dominant idea of the three prayers in the *Benedictio papae de episcopo facti* is the same as that which the changes in the formulas of ordination were intended to demonstrate: when the new pope acceded to the throne of Peter, he saw his episcopal mandate, which had up until that time been limited to his own particular church, widen out to embrace the entire Catholic community.

In virtue of the election (note, *not* of the *blessing*) and the acceptance of the election on the part of the one chosen, the new pope is invested with a mandate and a ministry for the governance and guidance of the universal Church.

[57] Formulas that grow ever more eloquent expressed the consciousness of the pope's exclusive prerogatives, insofar as he was *vicarius Petri.* This was a consequence of several stages of development of these ideas and the terminology in which they were expressed. In the fourth century, Pope Siricius (384–398) claimed for the Church of Rome the *sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum.* In the seventh century we have the famous expression *episcopus universalis.* With Paul the Deacon and the *Liber pontificalis* there appeared the formula, ripe for development, *caput omnium ecclesiarum.* At the end of the tenth century, the pope signed himself *catholicae ecclesiae episcopus.* In the twelfth century the *plenitudo potestatis* of the bishop of Rome in the Church was recognized. Innocent III systematized and synthesized all the famous theological and juridical expressions: *(Romana Ecclesia) . . . disponente domino super omnes alias ordinariae potestatis obtinet principatum, utpote mater universorum Christi fidelium et magistra. . . .* The formulas for the papal ordination of the thirteenth century find their justification in this context. Concerning the titles *vicarius Christi* and *vicarius Petri,* see especially M. Maccarrone, *Vicarius Christi: Storia del titolo papale* (Rome, 1952) 32–53.

There are some key expressions in the prayer, which, given their clarity and eloquence, will suffice to show the perfect synthesis of theology and jurisprudence that has inspired them.

By the will of the people, the new pope is taken from his "humble seat" (cathedra) and placed "on the throne of the prince of the Apostles." By his elevation to the throne of Peter, he is placed "at the head of the Churches *(in capite ecclesiarum).*" Insofar as he is successor of Peter, he is raised to the *culmen apostolicum.* He, the successor of Peter, will bear the *onus ecclesiasticae universitatis,* just as the Galilean fisherman bore on his shoulders the *molem universae christianitatis.* Chosen for this "humble ministry" by his priests, it is God himself who has desired him for "this height" of the pontificate.

The formulas for the *benedictio* offer a justification for a fact: the pope is universal bishop because he sits on the throne of Peter. This is a concept with a long history: the terms *sede apostolica,* the seat of the Apostle Peter, the *cathedra* of Peter, vicar of the Apostolic See, vicar of Peter[58] mark the most significant stages along a long historical path. They are all ideas that are connected to the same idea of apostolic succession, each introducing some nuance.

Apostolic succession of bishops is not, in fact, connected diachronically to one or another of the Apostles; rather it is to be understood as a participation by co-optation in the ministry of the Apostles. In this sense, succession may only be an imperfect and analogous concept. The Apostles may live with many successors. That is not the case for Peter. Given the nature of his position as sole head of the college of the Apostles, his ministry could not be divided among many successors in a similar fashion. Therefore, it is only with the death, or resignation, or (in the extreme case of schism or heresy) the removal of the bishop of Rome that there is room for a successor. The Church, built on the foundations of the twelve Apostles, could have three thousand bishops, but it could not have more than one single successor to Peter. In their own fashion and in the language distinctive of such texts, the liturgical texts explained why this was so.[59]

[58] See the study of Maccarrone mentioned above, *Vicarius Christi,* and, by the same author, *La dottrina del primato papale dal IV all'VIII secolo, nelle relazioni con le chiese occidentali,* Study Week of the Italian Center for Medieval Studies VII (Spoleto, 1960) 633–742.

[59] The space available for this essay, as well as its nature, obliges us to leave this question here. We recommend, however, that interested readers seek out more

At this point the evolution of this rite from the simplicity of the laying on of hands of the apostolic age to the ritual complexity of the pontificals of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries may be considered complete. Later adaptations will not be such as to alter the fundamental overall structure of the rite.

However, the sacrament of orders as it emerges from the scholastic synthesis is rather different from the vision of ministry in the New Testament and of the Church of the first two centuries.

The decline of the sacramentality of the episcopate had a direct consequence that will be of the greatest importance. The height of ordained sacramentality moved from the episcopate to the presbyterate. On the sacramental level, all was given with the presbyterate because it gave one power over the physical body of Christ, whereas the episcopate only gave jurisdiction over the Mystical Body.

From the synonymy of the apostolic age to the sacramental fundamentalism of the presbyterate and the consequent "sublimation" of the episcopate to the jurisdictional level, the road has been long, and the liturgy documents the various stages. It is upon this basis that the Liturgical Movement built the great reforms of Vatican II. In the last part of this essay, we will look briefly at these contributions.

V. THE RITUAL AND REFORMS OF VATICAN II

It is one of the great merits of the Liturgical Movement that it was able not only to renew the liturgy but also, and one might even say especially, the theology of the sacrament of orders. It was because of the impetus provided by this theological renewal that the reform of the rites of ordination was possible. This was a service that the history of theology and of liturgy will treasure as a most precious heritage. With their study of the ancient rituals of ordination, the leaders of the Litur-

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specialized studies. The position of the present author is well expressed in the work already cited many times here, 203–209 and 219–223.

We might add some pages that would not be without interest on the problem of the meaning of the title *Benedictio papae de episcopo facti.* What is the meaning of the word *benedictio* in this case? We have already seen how, in the first millennium, the terms *benedictio, ordinatio, consecratio* mean absolutely the same thing and are mutually interchangeable. In the thirteenth century? One cannot help but realize the fact that at that moment in time the sacramentality of the episcopate entered a long tunnel from which it did not emerge for seven centuries, until Vatican II. Was this a function of a certain ecclesiology and of a certain canonical conception of the mandate and authority of the pope?

gical Movement created the conditions that made the great reforms possible. It was already Pius XII who, making use of the best of theological reflection, started the process that would lead ultimately to the conciliar constitution on the liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium.*

The renewal of Pius XII took place especially on the level of terminology and sacramental theology. The bishops, previously called assistants, became co-consecrators. The matter (that is, the fundamental gesture of the sacrament) became once again the laying on of hands (the Council of Florence, in 1439, had so designated the *traditio instrumentorum,* DS 1326). The bishops were once again recognized as bearing a collegial corresponsibility for evangelization.

The basis for a recovery of the sacramentality of the episcopate, which the Council of Florence had sacrificed in favor of the subdiaconate[60] according to a scholastic canonical theory,[61] was also laid.

Vatican II built its ritual reforms upon the principle that the episcopate is the highest degree and the origin of the sacrament of orders. According to this vision, the presbyterate and diaconate are sacraments by participation, auxiliary degrees of what is the pastoral ministry par excellence, that of the bishop. The new ritual begins with this refound consciousness.

The criteria that have guided the work of revision of the ritual of ordination are the same ones that have inspired all the liturgical reforms of the Council: "In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so as to express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, as far as is possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully, actively and as a community." (*SC* 21) The Council asked for "an accurate theological, historical and pastoral study" as a prior condition of every innovation. Since that had been the task of the Liturgical Movement, its fruits were at the disposal of the international commission that had been given the task of guiding the great enterprise to its conclusion. Many of the leaders who had been part of the preparatory movement were part of this commission.

These are the principal theological lines that characterized the reform:

[60] The Council of Florence, *Decretum pro Armenis* (1439), DS 1326. The Code of Canon Law of 1917 maintained the classification of Florence (canon 949).

[61] Toward the end of the twelfth century, Peter the Cantor tells us that "recently the subdiaconate has come to be numbered among the sacred orders." See P. Jounel, "Ordinations," 176.

The sacrament of orders is tripartite, comprising the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate. The subdiaconate was simply suppressed.

The summit of the sacrament of orders is the episcopate, which is the continuation of the apostolic ministry and is the center and source of all of the individual churches.[62]

The bishop is the head, the leader, the pontiff of his church. Beside him, a bit lower than him, are the presbyters, auxiliary ministers of the bishop, almost an extension of the bishop. They are a sort of multiplication of the bishop insofar as they teach, govern, and sanctify that part of the people of God entrusted to them by their pastor, a state they could never have attained by themselves.

A step lower are the deacons, ministers and servants of the people, and for that reason, also of the bishop and the presbyters in the exercise of their pastoral ministry. Vatican II found once again the fullness of shape and potential for this ministry, rescuing it from the merely cultic level where it had languished for so many centuries and also from its status as a mere stage along the way to the presbyteral dignity, giving it once again its original shape as a service of charity (explicitly making reference to the seven deacons of Jerusalem, Acts 6:3) in imitation of Christ, who came, "not to be served, but to serve" (Matt 20:28).

On the expressly ritual level, one must mention the dropping of certain formulas that played with questionable allegories (such as the formulas for the imposition of the gloves and the miter[63]) or of gestures that were redundant or merely repetitions of similar gestures (for example, the anointing of the thumb or the singing of the *Veni Creator*).

All three rituals were introduced by the schema of a homily that offers a theological synthesis of the mystery that is being celebrated.

[62] A consequence of the recovery of this theological vision of the episcopate is the overcoming of the purely jurisdictional view of episcopal authority. According to the view that became traditional after the Scholastic period, the presbyterate was the height of sacramentality because it gave one power over the *physical* body of Christ, whereas the episcopate added nothing to it except jurisdictional power over the *mystical* body of Christ.

[63] In reference to the imposition of the miter, it is worth noting that this has been rethought in the second edition of the Roman Pontifical (1992), where the miter has become a symbol of the "splendor of holiness" that ought to shine forth in the conduct of the new bishop and the pledge of an "incorruptible crown of glory" that will be given to him when the "Prince of shepherds" appears.

The candidates for the diverse orders are interrogated in a fashion that imitates the outline for the ancient *examinatio* of a candidate for the episcopate. The purpose of this interrogation is to ascertain the canonical and moral fitness of the candidates and to receive the promises of obedience to ecclesiastical discipline and (for candidates for the presbyterate and diaconate) to the proper pastor, the bishop.

The formulas that accompany the anointing and the *traditio* of the insignia and of the *instrumenta* have been updated and are marked with a real simplicity and clarity. This is intended to free them from any inclination to allegorization and overburdening them with symbolic meanings.

The ordination of the deacon puts one aspect in high relief. The diaconate is no longer a stage for getting closer to the presbyterate but has become, once again, a ministry in itself, in which the candidate may also pass his entire life. This will be the case (at least given the current canonical situation) if the candidate is currently married. If he is celibate, he must remain in that state either as a deacon or if he moves on to the presbyterate. The formula of ordination (which is still that of the Verona) eliminates any allusion to the idea of promotion in the future to a higher degree of ministry.

However, the most important innovation concerns the prayer of episcopal consecration. Having abandoned the formula of the Verona (with its Gallican addition *sint speciosi*), the new ritual returns to the formula of Hippolytus, which is more a part of the catholic, that is, ecumenical tradition, of East and West.

Finally, there has been the introduction of a new rite, in which the one aspiring to the diaconate or presbyterate affirms publicly that he is willing to take on the burdens and responsibilities of the ministry, to prepare himself adequately to carry it out, for the benefit of the Christian people, the glory of God, and the welfare of the Church. Admission to candidacy for a candidate for holy orders may take place during the Mass or a Liturgy of the Word. The declaration will be made in the hands of the bishop or the major superior of the religious institute or his delegate.

As will be noted, the new rites offer, in some instances, the recovery of important elements of the tradition while leaving others aside. This is always with the intention of making more clear the sense of the mystery that is being celebrated and the roles of the various ministries.

This may all be summed up in this way: sacred orders are part of the plan of salvation which, with their beginning in the Old Testament, have been brought to completion in Christ. However, they now need

to be historically realized in the time and space of those whom the same Jesus Christ has chosen as his vicars, those who will continue his work of being shepherds of the sheep.

This actualization is being brought about by the same Holy Spirit in which Christ was consecrated in the water of the Jordan and which he promised and then gave to his Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the Jordan of the Church, in order to make it able to continue what he had begun by the power of the same Spirit.

But even in the power of the Spirit the bishops would never be able to accomplish such a task. It is for this reason that God has given them co-workers in the presbyters, who help him in the rule, evangelization, and sanctification of the people of God, and in the deacons, called to be at his side in worship, in the Word, and in charity.

Sustained by the power of the Spirit, the people of God will be able, under the guidance and with the help of their pastors and ministers, to reach the prize of eternal life.

The Ministries in the Roman Rite

The question of the history of the ministries and minor orders, their origins and evolution in praxis and law, in the liturgical documents, in the magisterium of the Church, and in the theological reflection of the West is too complex to treat in a complete fashion in the brief space available in a liturgical manual. We will limit ourselves here to noting some of the principal milestones of this development, so that some attention may be given to the rites of institution after Vatican II.

I. FROM MINISTRIES TO MINOR ORDERS IN THE WESTERN CHURCH

The *Apostolic Tradition* is, once again, the first document that gives us an organic and coherent ritual for the institution of ministries in the Church of Rome.

Other than the three principal degrees of the Catholic hierarchy—the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate—Hippolytus lists the following ministries, for which, he notes, there is no laying on of hands because they are not for the offering of the oblation, nor do they exercise a liturgical ministry. Hands are laid on (χειροτονία) clerics for liturgical service (*Apost. Trad.* 10). These are simply instituted[64]

[64]The terminological problem is important and delicate. We will limit ourselves here to noting that the *Apostolic Tradition* uses the terms "to institute" and "institu-

(καθίσταται / καθίσθασται: *confessores,*[65] virgins, lectors; *Apost. Trad.* 9, 10, 11); named (ὀνομάζειν: subdeacons; *Apost. Trad.* 13); simply recognized by their intention (virgins; *Apost. Trad.* 12) or by the efficacy of their ministry (healers; *Apost. Trad.* 14). Nothing is said about the ministry of teachers, who play such an essential role in the baptismal catechesis of the *Apostolic Tradition.* Perhaps they were assimilated, at some point, to the lectors.[66]

A very interesting question is posed by the ritual for the institution of confessors: it attests that a confessor who personally undergoes persecution need not, should he be designated to the diaconate or presbyterate, undergo the laying on of hands (*Habet enim honorem presbyteratus per suam confessionem; Apost. Trad.* 9). This seems to be an echo of a time, already nearly gone, when it was recognized that the Spirit of God was free to pour out his gifts by ways and means other than those commonly accepted and recognized.[67]

1. *The Ministries Instituted in the Ancient Western Churches*

A few decades later, Pope Cornelius made a list of ministries and, using anachronistic terms, of orders, a list that expanded on the list of Hippolytus. This list is practically identical to the third prayer in the solemn orations of Holy Thursday. A synopsis of the three follows:

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tion" whether for the major orders or for the non-ordained ministries, while the terms χειροτονία / χειροτονεῖν are strictly limited to the former.

[65] For the various interpretations of the word and its semantic evolution, see A. Faivre, *Naissance d'une hiérarchie: Les premières étapes du cursus clérical,* Théologie historique 40 (Paris, 1977) 272.

[66] Ibid., 252, 307.

[67] Faivre says in this regard: "It seems that a laying on of hands was not required by the first disciples. It was judged necessary neither for the Apostles, because they were in direct contact with Christ, nor for the prophets, nor for the doctors, nor for any other possessor of a charismatic gift, because they were considered to be in direct contact with the Spirit" (*Naissance,* 4). The author notes that this situation could not have lasted for too long a time, and that the Apostles and missionaries would have felt quite soon the need to leave at the head of the communities that they had founded, people who were responsible and particularly full of the Spirit of God. In such a context, the "laying on of hands signifies the presence of the Spirit in the one who receives it, much more than it transmits such a gift" (ibid.).

Hippolytus	*Cornelius*	*Holy Thursday*
subdeacon	subdeacons	subdeacons
	acolytes	acolytes
lector	lector	lector
	porter	porter
confessors		confessors
healers	exorcist	exorcist[68]
virgins	virgins	virgins
widows	widows	widows

Things were not very different in other areas of the Church. A synopsis follows:

Gaul	*Spain*	*Africa*
subdeacon	subdeacon	subdeacon
acolyte		
exorcist	exorcist	exorcist
lector	lector	lector
porter		
psalmist		
	confessor	confessor[69]
virgins		
widows		

2. *The* Cursus Honorum

Very quickly the idea arose of a progressive advancement in an ecclesiastical career by means of the various steps of what would come to be called the minor orders. For a long time, to be a lector marked the beginning of clerical status. Boys often as young as ten or twelve years of age were accepted into the ministry, having first passed a reading test with which they demonstrated their professional capability. For them there would be no further advancement upon the steps of their careers until they were twenty or even thirty years of age. A time of

[68] We have united here the ministries of healing and of exorcism less for philological reasons than because of the objective affinity.

[69] Cyprian says that he has made an "Optatus confessor" a subdeacon in *Epist.* 29. Cited in Faivre, *Naissance*, 252.

service and testing in virtue was needed for an eventual advancement in clerical life. But it was not impossible that some would prefer to remain lectors for their entire lives, if for no other reason than that they were not bound to the continence required of the higher grades.

Advancement in an ecclesiastical career took place according to time schemes and conditions that were not at all uniform, varying from the rather free attitudes of Africa to the rigorousness of the Iberian peninsula. Over the course of centuries, these steps would become more and more merely brief and formal intervals along the path of an ecclesiastical career. In this evolution the tendency to consider the presbyterate as the natural end point and crown of a clerical career would play an important role. The Council of Trent will already find such practices in place and will not be able to do anything other than exert all its legislative force for the formation of aspirants to the presbyterate.

3. *The Rites of Institution/Ordination to the Minor Orders*

Near the end of the fifth century, in the southern part of Gaul, an apocryphal work appeared that would have a great influence on the future of the Gallican and French liturgy, and, eventually on the Roman as well. This was the *Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua,* which, according to the most recent scholarship, is to be attributed to Gennadius of Marseilles.[70] What is striking is the selection of gestures all centered on the symbolism of what would later be called the handing over of the instruments, that is, giving the object or the instrument proper to the service being rendered, which is intended to signify the sense or the nature of the ministry being conferred. A brief formula will, in some cases, make explicit what the sign or gesture says by allusion.

These are the instruments referred to: the paten and an empty chalice for the subdeacon, a candlestick and an empty ampule for the acolyte, a book containing the prayers for exorcism for the exorcist, the "book that he will have to read" for the lector, the key to the church for the porter. The institution of the psalmist (cantor) is a bit different. For this rite, which the presbyter can also fulfill, there is no giving of a book.

The gesture is preceded by an admonition of the candidate, or the people, by the bishop in order to remind them of the meaning of the ministry and the responsibility to fulfill it in the most faithful and

[70] Our interest here is in the final section, a brief collection of canons gathered together under the subtitle *Recapitulatio ordinationis officialium ecclesiae.*

solicitous manner possible. A formula is provided for the exorcist, the lector, and the porter.

The ritual of the *Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua* is found in the *Missale Francorum,* in which it is followed by a series of *benedictiones,* one or two that are to be administered for each order. The ritual of the *Missale Francorum* is taken up, romanized a bit, by the Old Gelasian, and so will enter the Romano-Germanic Pontifical, a milestone on the road to the definitive ritual that will, via the Pontifical of William Durandus, be finalized in the Roman Pontifical of Paul V.

Three brief notes: (a) The *Statuta Ecclesiae antiqua* already uses the language of *ordinare/ordinatio.* (b) In the eleventh century it will become obligatory to receive each grade in order before moving to the higher grade. (c) At the end of the twelfth century the subdiaconate will begin to be included among the major orders, at the expense of the episcopate, the sacramentality of which will be eclipsed. Scholasticism will provide the foundation for such a strange result. The Council of Florence will give it official sanction in the *Decretum pro Armenis.* The Code of Canon Law of 1917 will fix it juridically. Only the Pontifical of Vatican II will reestablish the proper theological and juridical perspective. It should be said, however, that the subdiaconate was never conferred by the laying on of hands.

II. THE MINISTRIES INSTITUTED BY VATICAN II

With the motu proprio *Ministeria quaedam* (henceforth *MQ*) in 1972, Pope Paul VI put into effect the reforms of the non-ordained ministries according to the directives of Vatican II (cf. *SC* 62, 28). He did this by a fourfold movement:

a) Reserving the term "order" for the sacramental ministries (episcopate, presbyterate, diaconate) and adopting the term "instituted ministries" for the others;

b) Suppressing the concept of the minor order. In this way the roles of porter and exorcist, the tonsure (which had become a sort of minor order), and the subdiaconate disappeared;

c) Retaining as instituted ministries only the roles of lector and acolyte (in the last of which the principal prerogatives and functions of the subdiaconate would survive);

d) Ordering that these two ministries "be maintained in the entire Latin Church " (*MQ* 4), but conceding to national episcopal confer-

ences the possibility of devising others and requesting their institution by the Apostolic See "because they have been judged, for particular reasons, necessary and useful in a particular region" (*MQ* 4).

The choice of terminology found in *Ministeria quaedam*, a return to the language of the *Apostolic Tradition,* is dense with theological implications. It means, from the very choice of the words, that certain functions and ministries found their legitimation in the priesthood conferred on all Christians with their baptism. These roles do not imply, therefore, a greater sacramentality but simply the exercise of that priestly dignity which properly inheres in each of the baptized, which the post-baptismal anointing symbolizes and guarantees.

These are, therefore, ministries and not orders. But they are called "instituted" ministries in order to distinguish them from the innumerable spontaneous forms of service, worship, catechesis, and charity in which the whole Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is so rich by virtue of the Spirit. The institution intends not so much to legitimate or guarantee a ministry as to testify to the particular consideration that the Church dedicates to it, seeing in its exercise a symbolic projection, almost an iconicity, of its own mission. In this sense the various ministries are at the same time a gift of God, a sign of the vitality of the Church and of particular communities.

1. *The Institution of Lectors*

According to the new ritual, *De institutione lectorum et acolythorum* (henceforth *ILA*) the lector who proclaims the Word of God from the ambo is an icon of the Church which announces the gospel to the world.[71] His presence and ministry are a response of the Church to the command it has received: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). It is the Word, which it is his task to proclaim, that justifies the existence of the lector. If the Church exists to announce the Word of God to all humanity, every Christian, reborn of water and confirmed in the Holy Spirit, has a prophetic vocation. From all of its sons and daughters, the Church chooses some to exercise this service in a particularly authentic manner.

By its nature, the Word of God demands understanding, inner adherence, and love. The lector knows it, loves it, and makes it his own (*ILA* 11). The words of the formula of blessing (*ILA* 12) reinforce,

[71] *Editio typica,* Vatican City, 1972.

with the authority proper to the *lex orandi,* the words of the episcopal exhortation, which are yet once more reinforced by the handing over of the Scriptures, with which the rite of institution ends (*ILA* 13).

2. *The Institution of Acolytes*

The acolyte (that is, the one who accompanies) takes up, other than the tasks that liturgical tradition allots him, a large part of those tasks that had devolved upon the subdeacon (in such measure that in some regions the acolyte may be called subdeacon—*MQ* 6) and aspects of the extraordinary minister of communion. Among the instituted ministries, this is the one that is closest to the traditional idea of the minor orders: "To you is given the task of aiding the presbyters and the deacons in the fulfillment of the functions" (*ILA* 29).

From the holiness of the service the acolyte is called to perform, there is born a particular rapport with the sacrament of the Eucharist and the altar, and the need to conform his life to the sacrifice of Christ. Serving at the altar and distributing communion to the faithful, he knows that he must become one with them, for it is not possible to reverence the Eucharistic Body of Christ without at the same time recognizing his Mystical Body, especially the poorest and most infirm. This is the central idea in the formula of blessing that the bishop says: "Make them assiduous in the service of the altar, faithfully distributing the bread of life to their brothers and sisters, growing always in faith and in charity" (*ILA* 30). In this way he will become an offering to the Father: "May your life be worthy of the service of the table of the Lord and of the Church" (*ILA* 31).

3. *The Institution of Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist*

With the instruction *Immensae caritatis* (henceforth *IC*) of 1973, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments set out the institution of extraordinary ministers of communion. The text reveals a pastoral attitude that is theologically rich. It is founded on the desire of the faithful to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist and the difficulty that the ordinary ministers (bishops, presbyters and deacons) may have in satisfying this legitimate desire of the faithful.

In order to avoid this pastoral difficulty, the instruction provides for the institution of extraordinary ministers so that all people may be assured of the possibility of access to Eucharistic communion. The conditions for the exercise of their ministry are laid out with precision,

but also with a certain largesse: (a) the absence of the ordinary minister; (b) difficulty on the part of the ordinary minister in personally fulfilling this fundamental ministry; (c) the number of the faithful being so large that distribution of communion would take too long.

The rite for the institution of extraordinary ministers of communion[72] imitates those already seen: an allocution by the celebrant to the people explaining the meaning of the rite and the mandate it confers (*IC* 3); a request for a public assent on the part of the candidate for the mandate to be conferred (*IC* 4); an invitation to common prayer and prayer of blessing and investiture: that the sacrament which they distribute give them life and gain for them merit toward eternal life (*IC* 5).

Provision is also made for a very short formula for the conferral of the same mandate *ad actum* (*IC* 13).

[72] *Not* 9 (1973) 165–167.

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E. Marriage

Stefano Parenti

13

The Christian Rite of Marriage in the East

1. *Betrothal and Marriage*

The only liturgical tradition to be considered here is the Byzantine. As in the Oriental traditions, the marriage rites are divided into two parts, at one time chronologically distinct. By convention they are commonly called "betrothal" and "marriage," whereas the Greek terms used, at least today, are μνήστρα or ἀρραβών (betrothal or engagement) and στεφάνωμα (crowning). According to some authors, this distinction goes back to a twofold rite of marriage. Modern betrothal would correspond to ancient marriage celebrated within the family or clan, and the marriage ceremony would correspond to the tribal rite, which pertains to the state and which alone grants the right of cohabitation.[1]

By introducing the *arrha sponsalicia* (prenuptial gifts) into civil law, Constantine changed the simple freedom to contract marriage into a true juridic act with legal consequences in case there was a change of mind.[2] Canon 98 of the Council in Trullo (692) states that to attempt to marry a person already betrothed to someone else is equivalent to adultery.[3] In 1066 Patriarch John VIII Xiphilinus presided at a synod that proclaimed the juridical equivalence of betrothal and marriage,

[1] A. Schwerdtfeger, *Ethnological Sources of the Christian Marriage Ceremony* (Stockholm, 1982) 94–123.

[2] T. Mommsen, ed., *Codex Theodosianus,* 3 (Berlin, 1905) 5.2.

[3] See P.-P. Joannou, *Discipline generale antique.* Tome I^{er} I^{ère} partie: *Les canons des conciles oecuméniques (II^{e}–IX^{e} s.),* Pontifical Commission for the Redaction of the Code of Oriental Canon Law (Grottaferrata, 1962) 235.

a decision that was confirmed in 1084 by the emperor Alexis I Comnenus.[4]

2. *Pre-Euchological Period*

In the Byzantine world, as in the Roman, the Christian Church was not immediately interested in the rules for marriage. These continued to be the business of the state. We learn from Gregory the Theologian (bishop of Constantinople in 380/81, then of Nazianzen from 382 to 384) that some Christian families were asking to have the nuptial crowning done by a presbyter, but he himself believed that it should be done by the father.[5] In *Letter* 93, which is later than 383, Gregory wrote to inform Vitalian that he could not take part in the marriage of Vitalian's daughter Olympia, although he would have liked "to join the hands of the two young spouses in order to join them to God's."[6] This is a direct reference to the *dexterarum iunctio* of Roman law. John Chrysostom worried that the presbyter invited for the nuptial blessing might take part in the customary feast that followed.[7] Dispelling all possible suspicion from the crowning (for a long time considered a pagan practice to be avoided), he interpreted the crowns as a symbol of victory over concupiscence.[8]

At the end of the sixth century it was the patriarch's duty to perform the crowning on the occasion of imperial weddings. The description of the wedding of the emperor Maurice (582–602), celebrated by John the Faster, is from this period. The rite took place, not in church, but in the imperial hall, from then on called the *Augustalion*. There the celebrant proceeded to the joining of hands, the crowning and the distribution of "the divine-human mysteries" (θεανδρικῶν μυστηρίων μετέδωκεν), that is, holy communion.[9] But in 610 Heraclius and Irene were crowned by the patriarch Sergius in the palatine palace of St. Stephen in

[4] H. Hunger, *Byzantinistische Grundlagenforschung* (London, 1973) 322–334; see K. Ritzer, *Le Mariage dans les Eglises chrétiennes du I^er^ au XI siècle.* LO 45 (Paris, 1962) 178–191.

[5] St. Gregory of Nazianzen, *Lettres,* trans. P. Gallay (Paris, 1967) 2:122–123.

[6] Ibid., 84.

[7] *In illud: Propter fornicationes uxorem* (PG 51:211); on the presbyter's presence see also *Homilia in Genesim* 48 (PG 54:443).

[8] *In epistolam I ad Timotheum, Hom.* 9 (PG 62:546, 51–52).

[9] Theophylactus Simocatta, *Historiae,* I, 10, 2–4, ed. C. de Boor (Lipsia, 1887) 57. Both the *dexterarum iunctio* and the nuptial crowning are amply illustrated in many

Daphni.[10] According to the *Ekloga* of 741, the civil effects of marriage could be had in church "with the blessing" (δι' εὐλογίας),[11] an example of "concordat" marriage *ante litteram*. But a little more than a century later, the *Novella* of Leo VI (886–912) makes the Church's blessing obligatory.[12] The later τυπικόν of the emperor Constantine IX Monomachus reserves the nuptial blessing to the bishop or to a presbyter with the bishop's permission.[13]

3. *Wedding Rites in the* Barberini *Euchologion*

After a prayer for the blessing of a house (183), the *Barberini* euchologion reports for the first time, in the second half of the eighth century,[14] the Byzantine rites for marriage. We present them here in schematic form:

A. Prayer for the betrothal (ἐπὶ μνηστείας)
   1) Presidential prayer
   2) Prayer at the bowing of the head

B. Prayer for the wedding (εἰς γάμους)
   Petitions by the deacon
   1) Presidential prayer
   nuptial crowning and joining of right hands
   2) Prayer at the bowing of the head
   3) Prayer for the common cup

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artistic finds. See, for example, E. de Vald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint*, 3, 2 (Princeton, 1942) pl. 4; E. H. Kantorowicz, "On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960) 1–16; C. Walter, "The Dexterarum Junctio of Lepcis Magna in Relationship to the Iconography of Marriage," *Antiquités Africaines* 14 (1979) 271–283; Idem, "Marriage Crowns in Byzantine Iconography," *Zograf* 10 (1979) 83–91.

[10] Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia,* recensuit C. de Boor (Lipsia, 1883–1885; (New York–Hildesheim, 1980) 1:299, rr. 8–14.

[11] *Ekloga,* 1, 8, ed. J. Zepos and P. Zepos, *Jus Graeco-romanum* (Athens, 1931) 2:23.

[12] A. Dain, *Les Nouvelles de Léon VI le Sage* (Paris, 1944) 297. P. L'Huillier; "Novella 89 of Leo the Wise on Marriage: An Insight into Its Theoretical and Practical Impact," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 32/2 (1987) 156–162.

[13] V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople,* Le patriarcat byzantin, series 1 (Constantinople, 1936) 2:923.

[14] According to Pentkovsky, "Le cérémonial du mariage dans l'euchologe byzantin du XI[e]–XII[e] siècle," *Le Mariage,* BELS 77 (Rome, 1994) 268, the nuptial prayers of the *Barberini* seem to have been already known in the *kontakion* by Romanos the

Communion
Dismissal

C. Alternate prayer for the wedding (εὐχὴ ἄλλη εἰς γάμους)[15]

The structure of the two rites is very simple, but it raises several questions of interpretation regarding marriage. The meaning of the adjective "common" (κοινόν) applied to the cup and the position of the prayer with which it is blessed—*before* communion—are unclear. Likewise, we do not know whether the "life-giving communion" is distributed at the end of the entire Eucharistic celebration—and thus simply postponed—or during a celebration of the Liturgy of the Presanctified.[16] Scholars generally agree that it is a chalice containing the Eucharistic wine,[17] made such by the prayer of blessing and the subsequent addition of the consecrated bread according to the rules of *immixtio et consecratio* well known in the Roman Rite.[18]

But the witness of two ancient tenth-century euchologia, *St. Petersburg gr.* 226 (southern Italy) and *Sinai gr.* 957 (Palestine) lets us interpret the function of the common cup differently. In these codices its prayer has been copied *after* the dismissal, at the end of the wedding rite, which is usually the case for newer prayers and rites.[19] This explains the hesitation of the editor of the *Barberini*. Wishing to integrate the prayer into the wedding rite itself, he has done so awkwardly by placing it before communion. The result is that, *editorially speaking*,

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Melodist (6th cent.) on the wedding at Cana, but the phrases examined are actually biblical citations (2 Cor 11:2 with allusions to Eph 5:27 and Heb 13:4) that the editor of Romanos has not identified (see Romanos le Mélode, *Hymnes* [Introduction, critical text, translation, and notes by J. Grosdidier de Matons], vol. 2, SCh 110 [Paris, 1965] 295–321).

[15] *BAR,* 184–189. An Italian translation of the *Barberini* text is found in G. Baldanza, "Il rito del matrimonio nell'eucologio Barberini 336: Analisi della sua visione teologica," *EphLit* 93 (1979) 320–321 in a note.

[16] For example, the same *Barberini* euchologion (172.6) provides for communion outside Mass on the occasion of the coronation of the emperor, but it is expressly called Presanctified (προηγιασμένα).

[17] For example, K. Ritzer, *Le Mariage dans les Eglises chrétiennes du Ier au XI siècle.* LO 45 (Paris, 1962) 202–203; M. Arranz, "La Liturgie des Présanctifiés de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin," *OCP* 47 (1981) 380.

[18] G. Passarelli, "La cerimonia dello Stefanoma (incoronazione) nei riti matrimoniali bizantini secondo il Codice Cryptense Γ.β. VII (X Sec.)," *EphLit* 93 (1979) 386–387.

[19] Comparative table in Pentkovsky, "Le cérémonial du mariage," 285.

these two tenth-century provincial manuscripts present an older rite than that of the *Barberini*. Thus the common cup remains a simple cup of wine, blessed like any other *eulogy*.[20]

4. *Wedding Rites in Constantinople Between the Tenth and Fourteenth Centuries*

It is to a monk that we owe precious information about marriage in the capital between the eighth and ninth centuries. We are referring to the famous Theodore († 826), reformer and hegumen of the Constantinople monastery of Studios. In a number of letters he speaks indignantly about the third marriage of the emperor Constantine VI, which was blessed by an obliging presbyter. He quotes word for word the first prayer of the *Barberini* euchologion, which he obviously considers central to the rite.[21] Theodore refers to communion, particularly in *Letter* 50 to Naucratius, but here again it is impossible to decide whether this is the Presanctified or the ordinary Eucharistic liturgy.[22] A little more than a century later, the *De caerimoniis* by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus († 959), a protocol collection showing archaic tastes, provides for a full celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy at imperial weddings. It seems, however, that the royal couple did not take part in this.[23]

Before we move on to liturgical evidence in the strict sense, it is worth recalling that during this period civil law left a deep mark on Christian marriage in Byzantium. A tenth-century synodal text applies the obligations of marriage to betrothal as far as the inheritance is concerned. This *tomos* was confirmed on April 16, 1066, by the patriarch John VII Xiphilinos and, for the civil authority, by the emperor Nicephorus Boloniates in January 1066.[24] Again in the eleventh

[20] Pentkovsky ("Le cérémonial du mariage," 264), with whose interpretation I fully agree, points out that in the Armenian Rite the blessing of the cup takes place at home after the wedding ceremony (see H. Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium Coptorum, Syrorum et Armenorum in administrandis sacramentis* [Würzburg, 1864] 2:474–476, 482; reprint 2 vols. in 1, Graz, 1961).

[21] *Letters* 22 and 23. *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* recensuit G. Fatouros. Pars prior, prolegomena et textum epp. 1–70 continens, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 30/1 (Berlin–New York, 1992) 58 and 87.

[22] Ibid., 149–150.

[23] A. Vogt, ed., *Le livre des cérémonies de Constantine Porphyrogénète* (1925) 2:20. The betrothal takes place in the palatine church of St. Stephen.

[24] Grumel, *Les Regestes,* 2:812 and 896.

century the τυπικόν of Constantine Monomachus (1042–1055) asserts that the nuptial blessing is reserved to the bishop or presbyter (with the bishop's permission), but the latter must hand over any honoraria he receives to the bishop.[25]

The marriage rites "for emperors and others" are described for us in rich detail by the famous euchologion *Paris Coislin* 213, copied at Constantinople in 1027. It once belonged to the presbyter Strateghios, chaplain of the patriarchal oratories.

A. Rite of betrothal (ἐπὶ μνήστροις) for emperors and others (βασιλείων καὶ λοιπῶν)

Petitions by the deacon
1) Presidential prayer (= *Bar*)
2) Prayer at the bowing of the head (= *Bar*)
Exchange of rings
Dismissal—the betrothed leave the church

B. (εἰς γάμους)

Entry into the church to the singing of Psalm 127
Petitions by the deacon
1) Presidential prayer (= *Bar*)
nuptial crowning and joining of right hands
2) Prayer at the bowing of the head (= *Bar*)
3) Prayer for the common cup (= *Bar*)
Communion
Dismissal

C. Prayer[26]

The euchologion places the betrothal immediately after the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy. The celebrant, a bishop (ἀρχιερεῦς), is in the sanctuary, and those who wish to be joined (ζεύγνυσθαι) stand before the *cancellum,* the man on the right and the woman on the left. The rings are placed on the left side of the altar, gold for the groom and iron for the bride. The celebrant makes the sign of the cross three times over the heads of the spouses (νύμφιοι), while the deacon recites the petitions, which already pray for the future children. The two

[25] Ibid., 2:923.
[26] Text in Pentkovsky, "Le cérémonial du mariage," 277–281.

prayers from the *Barberini* follow. Next the celebrant gives the rings, which are exchanged by the contracting parties. Then the celebrant joins their right hands, and they leave hand in hand. This concludes the betrothal.

The wedding rite in the strict sense is not introduced by its own title but by the rubric: "If at the same time they wish to be crowned." In this simultaneous celebration of the two rites, and even more in the wedding terminology used in the betrothal, we see the effects of the application of the above-mentioned synodal *tomos,* which makes betrothal, from a civil point of view, equivalent to marriage. The adaptation of the rite to the new situation is a bit awkward. We see this when the text says that the couple, who have been betrothed before the doors of the sanctuary, should enter through the center of the church preceded by incense and the singing of Psalm 127 and proceed (again) to the *cancellum*. Meanwhile, on the holy table have been placed a chalice with the Presanctified Gifts, two crowns, and a cup filled with wine.

As in the *Barberini,* the deacon recites the petitions (although not the same ones), and the celebrant says the prayer "for marriage or crowning" (εὐχὴ ἐπὶ γάμοις ἤτοι στεφανώμασι). The latter, however, takes place with a formula borrowed from Psalm 8:6b. This is followed by the *dexterarum iunctio* with the *Barberini* prayer for the bowing of the head with which this second section concludes.

The communion rites are comparable in their simplicity to those for the Good Friday liturgy in the Roman Rite. They include the Our Father, elevation, *Sancta sanctis,* and the communion of the spouses with the Presanctified Gifts. After this the celebrant blesses the common cup, from which the spouses drink three times. At the end the cup "is returned or (as some do) is broken." The couple leaves the church.

The Constantinople tradition of *Coislin* 213 was borrowed more or less literally by later witnesses, such as *Grottaferrata Γ.β. I* (13th cent.),[27] *Athens National Library* 662 (13th/14th cent.),[28] and the euchologion of the emperor John Kantakouzenos (1347–1354), now known as *Moscow Holy Synod gr.* 279.[29] In the last two witnesses, after the common cup is

[27] For the text, ibid.

[28] P. Trempelas, Μικρόν Εὐχολόγιον (Athens, 1950–1955) sigla H.

[29] Description in N. F. Krasnosel'cev, *Svedenija o nekotorych liturgiceskich rukopisjach Vatikanskoj Biblioteki* (Kazan, 1885) 111–114.

consumed the celebrant congratulates the spouses with a formula inspired by Philippians 4:4-6, 9, but which the euchologion of Kantakouzenos still considers optional. This is followed by the litany of supplication, a clear influence of the monastic rite.[30]

The chapter on marriage in the *Coislin* euchologion concludes with two prayers for the ritual removal of the crowns and a prayer for second marriages.

5. *Provincial Wedding Rites Between the Tenth and Fifteenth Centuries*

In all Christian liturgical families, the history of the wedding rites is primarily a history of local rites. This is also true in the Byzantine tradition, in which individual euchological, folkloric, and ritual details are inserted in different ways and with various degrees of success into the standard rite of Constantinople, either pre-iconoclastic *(Barberini)* or post-iconoclastic *(Coislin* 213*)*. The *Barberini* euchologion testifies to this state of affairs when, as we have seen, at the end of the wedding rites it adds an alternate prayer for the crowning. Since it is impossible to describe here the many provincial wedding rites—almost as many as the number of manuscripts—we will merely select a few examples that we think are more important.[31]

a) Southern Italy

Around the second half of the tenth century, in the euchologion of Porfirij Uspenski *(St. Petersburg gr.* 226*),* the *dexterarum iunctio* is accompanied by the pneumatological formula "The most holy Spirit has joined" while Psalm 8:6b is sung in responsorial form (προκείμενον). We have aleady met this verse in Constantinople as a crowning formula. Before going on the prayer at the bowing of the head, as in the *Barberini*, the editor inserts two long prayers of blessing. These are marked by a long anamnesis of Old Testament couples.[32]

[30] Ibid., 113; see also A.Dmitr, 2:362 and 364.

[31] We will not mention, since it is of little importance, variations in the formula and manner of exchanging the rings during the betrothal. Save for a few exceptions, it does not significantly change the general structure of the rite. For southern Italy, see by way of example A. Jacob, "L'euchologe de Sancte-Marie du Patir et ses sources," in AA.VV., *Atti del Congresso internazionale su S. Nilo di Rossano,* Sept. 28–Oct. 1, 1986 (Rossano-Grottaferrata 1989) 94–98.

[32] Description in A. Jacob, *L'euchologe de Porphyre Uspenski. Cod. Leningr. gr.* 226 *(X^e siècle), Le Muséon* 78 (1965) 195, nos. 163–169.

Toward the end of the same century *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* places marriage at the end of the Eucharistic Liturgy, and follows the singing of Psalm 127 (Constantinople) with the veiling of the couple, a practice almost certainly borrowed from the Roman sacramentary. After the deacon's intercessions and essential prayer of Byzantine tradition, there is mention of an epistle and a gospel pericope, but their length is not indicated. Two long prayers follow, already met in *St. Petersburg gr.* 226. Inserted between them is the crowning, accompanied by Psalm 8:6b (Constantinople) and Psalm 127:3 and the joining of right hands. The prayer for the blessing of the common cup, which comes after Holy Communion, is also different from the Constantinople formula. At the end of the rite another alternate formula is given for the nuptial crowning.[33]

In the euchologia *St. Petersburg gr.* 226 and *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII*, the most obvious characteristic of Italo-Byzantine marriage is the other prayers for the crowning or blessing of the common cup and the *velatio*, inserted at various places into the Constantinople ritual.[34] Restricting ourselves to the prayers, it is worth mentioning the alternate prayer for the crowning, already met in the *Barberini* euchologion, for which an Alexandrian origin has been suggested.[35] There is also the very widespread Trinitarian crowning formula, "The Father blesses, the Son is well pleased, and the Holy Spirit crowns," with its many variants. Like the prayer prescribed in *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* for the dowry clothes,[36] it is also derived from Alexandria.[37] Note that the crowning formula which gave rise to the *textus receptus* "The servant of God *N*. is crowned . . ." (στέφεται ὁ δούλος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα),

[33] G. Passarelli, *L'Eucologio cryptense Γ.β. VII, sec. X,* Analekta Vlatadon 36 (Thessaloniki, 1982) 116–120, nos. 165–173 (text), and "La cerimonia della Stefanoma (incoronazione) nei riti matrimoniali bizantini secondo il Codice Cryptense Γ.β. VII (X Sec.)," *EphLit* 93 (1979) passim (commentary).

[34] See, for example, J. Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum* (Venice, 1730; reprint Graz, 1961) 221–222.

[35] G. Baldanza, "Il rito del matrimonio nell'eucologio Barberini 336: Analisi della sua visione teologica," *EphLit* 93 (1979) 332–334, 336 and 340 (list of manuscripts in which the prayer is found).

[36] Compare Passarelli, "L'Eucologio cryptense Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII," no. 161, with Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium,* 369.

[37] Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium,* 2:378; for the Greek texts see Passarelli, "L'Eucologio Athon. Panteleimonensis 77 alias 162 (1890)," *OCP* 48 (1982) 131.

modeled on the baptismal formula "The servant of God *N.* is baptized . . ." (βαπτίζεται ὁ δούλος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα), appears for the first time in two twelfth-century euchologia from northern Calabria.[38]

A group of twelfth- to sixteenth-century euchologia from southern Italy attributes the editing of the marriage rites to Methodius of Syracuse. An Italo-Greek, he was raised in Constantinople and was its patriarch from 842 to 846, just after the iconoclast controversy.[39] While it is hard to explain such a circumstantial attribution, a hypothesis is possible. The euchologion of the monastery of the Holy Savior in Messina, now *Oxford Bodleian Auct. E.5.13* (1121/2–1132), contains two crowning rites, one from the Constantinople tradition and a second from the Italo-Greek tradition. Naturally it is the first that is attributed to the patriarch Methodius, as if from a desire to authenticate its origin in this way.[40]

Among the marriage rites of Byzantine Italy, those of Salento (aside from some local practices) are structurally and euchologically closest to the Constantinople tradition. But we note that the blessing of the common cup takes place before the communion of the spouses, who are also given the cup to drink from afterward. An interesting practice for clerics who are getting married is to wear the φαινώλιον or φελώνιον of singers or the στιχάριον, the vestment worn by all clergy. It is proper for laymen to wear a sword. The crowning formula varies, depending on the manuscript.[41]

These celebrative categories, as we shall see, owe much to alien traditions and contain more or less important variants depending on the place. They would be kept alive until the sixteenth century, when the Italian version of the Byzantine Rite, now a ghost of its former self

[38] D. Gelsi, "Punti di riflessione sull'ufficio bizantino per la 'incoronazione' degli sposi," *La celebrazione cristiana del matrimonio: Simboli e testi.* Atti del II Congresso internazionale di liturgia (Rome, May 27–31, 1985), ed. G. Farnedi, AL 11 = SA 93 (Rome, 1986) 294, n. 36, mentions some variants.

[39] Some of the manuscripts bearing this attribution are mentioned in Passarelli, "Stato della ricerca sul formulario dei riti matrimoniali," *Studi bizantini e neogreci.* Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di studi bizantini (Galatina, 1983) 246, n. 23.

[40] Description in A. Jacob, "Un euchologe du Saint-Sauveur 'in Lingua Phari' de Messine. Le Bodleianus Auct. E.5.13," *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 50 (1980) nos. 10–11.

[41] There is an amply annotated Italian translation in M. Petta, "Ufficiatura del fidanzamento e del matrimonio in alcuni eucologi otrantini," *Familiare '82: Studi offerti per le nozze d'argento a R. Jurlano e N. Ditonno* (Brindisi, 1982) 95–104.

and lacking theological motivation, would be suppressed in favor of the Roman Rite, which in the most recent marriage rituals had left its deep imprint on the prayers.[42]

b) Middle East and Continental Greece

In the Palestinian euchologion *Sinai gr.* 957 (10th cent.) mentioned above, between betrothal and marriage there is a prayer for the preparation of the bridal chamber (στήσαι παστὸν γάμου) and, after the removal of the crowns, another for untying them (λύσιν).[43] In *Sinai gr.* 958, which is later (11th cent.), we occasionally see the same thing we met in the Italo-Greek euchologia: the insertion of many prayers into the Byzantine liturgical structure, with substitute, alternate, or dual formulas (optional?) instead of those prescribed by the proper Byzantine ritual. Between the first Byzantine prayer and the crowning the editor has inserted two other prayers. The second we recognize from having already seen it in the Italo-Greek euchologion *St. Petersburg gr.* 226. The nuptial crowning contains a formula inspired by Psalm 20:4b (LXX),[44] and unlike what was happening in Italy, it is *followed* by the Scripture readings (Heb 12:28–13:8 and John 2:1-11). The prayer for the blessing of the common cup has already been seen in Italy, as well as the prayer for the removal of the crowns. The communion rites, however, are modeled on the metropolitan tradition.[45]

Another important Oriental witness is *Sinai gr.* 973 (1152/53). At the beginning, the manuscript differentiates between a prayer for the "monetary gifts" of marriage and betrothal in the true and proper sense. The text of the prayer is identical to that of the third prayer for betrothal in the Coptic-Alexandrian tradition, just as the betrothal is

[42] See, for example, the euchologion *Barberini gr.* 385 (16th cent.). (Description in A. Jacob, "Les euchologes du fonds Barberini grec de la Bibliothèque Vaticane," *Didaskalia* 4 [1974] 165), and *Messina gr.* 173, copied by George Basilikos in the sixteenth century.

[43] A.Dmitr, 2:4 and 5.

[44] The same formula appears in the wedding crowns from the tenth/eleventh century illustrated by P. A. Drossoyianni, "A Pair of Byzantine Crowns," *Jahrbuch für Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3 (1982) 529–538. It should be asked whether, because of the psalm formula, the crowns should not be ascribed to the Oriental provinces rather than to Byzantium, as suggested.

[45] A.Dmitr, 2:27–31 (text) and ample commentary in Baldanza, "Il rito matrimoniale dell'Euchologio Sinaitico Greco 958 ed il significato della coronazione nella δόξα καὶ τιμή. Proposte per una ricerca teologica," *EphLit* 95 (1981) 289–315.

identical to the version found in *Sinai gr.* 958.[46] *Sinai gr.* 958 and *Sinai gr.* 973 share a unique and rare request for consent[47] and especially the presence of many (although different) prayers and local customs. Here too the biblical readings *follow* the nuptial crowning, creating another parallel with the Oriental traditions,[48] whereas for the crowning the metropolitan formula is kept (Ps 8:6b). On the other hand, the prayers for the blessing of the bridal chamber are shared with *Sinai gr.* 973, *Ottoboni gr.* 434 (Palestine, 1172) and *Vatican gr.* 1970 (southern Italy).[49]

All these similarities in prayers between the Oriental and Italo-Greek euchologia are explained, on the one hand, by the influence of the liturgical traditions of Alexandria and Antioch on the Greek liturgy in Italy, at least from the seventh century, and on the other hand, by the preservation of local rites and prayers in the Oriental patriarchates, even after they were forced to adopt the Byzantine rite (10th cent.).[50]

The fact that the Oriental prayers are added on to those of the Constantinople *ordo* is well illustrated by the twelfth-century provincial euchologion *Paris Coislin* 214 (f. 58r). Here the first Oriental prayer of *St. Petersburg gr.* 226 precedes the Byzantine crowning prayer; for this reason the editor calls it a "prologue." But even without reconstructing the complex set of influences among the various traditions, the same literary style characterizes the non-Byzantine prayers. We refer to their emphasis on the example of the biblical couples (whose remote model is perhaps Tobit 8:5-7). On the other hand, the Constantinople tradition finds the scriptural basis for its prayers exclusively in the account of the creation of the first couple and in the wedding at Cana. Recent studies have established an appropriate dependence between the non-Byzantine prayers for marriage and patristic writings from the Middle East.[51]

[46] Compare A.Dmitr, 2:95 with Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium,* 2:368.

[47] A.Dmitr, 2:96.

[48] Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium,* 2:410.

[49] Compare A. A. Theirmeyer, *Das Euchologion Ottoboni gr.* 434 *(12. Jahrhundert)* Rome, 1992, with A. Jacob, "L'euchologe de Sancte Marie du Patir et ses sources," AA.VV., *Atti del Congresso internazionale su S. Nilo di Rossano,* Sept. 28–Oct. 1, 1986 (Rossano-Grottaferrata, 1989) 96.

[50] See Ch. Hannick, "Annexions et reconquêtes byzantines: Peut-on parler d'«unitiasme» byzantin?" *Irén* 66 (1993) 451–474.

[51] Baldanza, "Il rito del matrimonio nell'eucologio Barberini," and "Il rito matrimoniale dell'Eucologio Sinaitico Greco 958."

We cannot describe the further development of provincial marriage rites here, except in broad outlines, since as yet we have no definitive study that has looked at the entire manuscript tradition. Such work is desperately needed because the *textus receptus,* which was fixed in the sixteenth-century liturgical books and is today regarded as *the* Byzantine rite of marriage, is actually from the provinces. Although we have limited our investigation to the many provincial euchologia described at the beginning of this century by the Russian A. Dmitrievskij, nonetheless we think certain constant tendencies can be identified.

First of all, the duplication of prayers continues. Oriental or local prayers are used for both marriage and the preceding rite of betrothal.[52] In the rite of betrothal, formulas for the exchange of rings, often drawn from biblical passages (Ps 117:15b-16 [LXX] or Luke 15:22), multiply and vary from place to place.[53] In the marriage rite we see, besides the usual proliferation of crowning formulas, the gradual disappearance in the fifteenth century of Eucharistic communion, now replaced by the common cup.[54] The spouses leave the church accompanied by the singing of hymns (τροπάρια) in honor of Mary or the martyrs who were crowned because of their testimony (1 Cor 9:25). This festive cortege to the home of the spouses atrophies into a ritual procession that takes place within the church before the conclusion of the rite.[55] The removal of the crowns now also takes place in church.[56]

The Constantinople marriage tradition continues to be observed in a few more conservative episcopal sees such as Thessalonika during the time of Archbishop Simeon († 1429), a cultivated student of his Church's liturgical traditions and the last of the Byzantine commentators.[57] Naturally the coming of the printing press did not prevent the survival of some local euchological traditions, at least as long as

[52] See the codex *Athos Lavra* 105 (15th cent.), A.Dmitr, 2:633–636.

[53] *Athos Lavra* 189 (13th cent.), *Sinai gr.* 960 (13th cent.), *Sinai gr.* 968 (1426) in A. Dmitr, 2:182, 193 and 401.

[54] *Sinai gr.* 968 (1426) in A.Dmitr, 2:404.

[55] See, for example, *Patmos* 104 (1234)***, *Athos Lavra* 189 (13th cent.)***, *Sinai gr.* 968 (1426), *Athos Lavra* 88 (1475), *Istanbul Holy Sepulcher* 8 (182) (15th cent.), *Athos Panteleimon* 364 (15th cent.), *Patmos* 690 (15th cent.), *Athos Koutloumousiou* 470 (1520), *Istanbul Panaghiou Taphou* 615 (757) (1522), *Athos Lavra* 21 (1536), in A.Dmitr, 2:404, 443, 459, 565, 651–652, 719, 739, 758.

[56] For example *Athos Lavra* 88 (1475), A.Dmitr, 2:441–443.

[57] *De honesto et legitimo conjugio* (PG 155:507–514).

manuscripts were copied. But once the work of copying ceased, all that was kept were folkloric practices and elements.[58]

6. *Second Marriages*

So far this rite has been less studied than that for first marriages. It presupposes a deeper look at questions of civil and ecclesiastical jurisprudence. It must also be remembered that Orthodox canon law, besides envisioning various cases of dissolution of the bond, also provides for the possibility of divorce in the strict sense, based on Matthew 19:6-9 and the doctrine of indulgence or οἰκονομία.[59]

After the peremptory statements of Paul (1 Cor 7:39-40), Church Fathers such as Basil and John Chrysostom[60] did not encourage second marriages, even in case of widowhood. Several divorces left profound marks on the religious and civil history of Byzantium. We need only recall Constantine VI's divorce from Mary of Paphlagonia and his subsequent marriage to Theodota, episodes that gave rise to the (moechian) controversy over adultery between an accommodating patriarch and the intransigent Studite monks. In fact, Theodore the Studite, whom we met earlier, has left us a kind of developed teaching on second religious marriages after a civil divorce. It can be summarized thus: Although the state authorizes them, the Church should not bless them, and in any case the rite of crowning cannot be repeated.[61]

On the front of the euchologia it is noteworthy that the oldest ones contain no special prayers for a second marriage.[62] In fact, the rules for second marriages were fixed in 920, after the emperor Leo VI's fourth marriage in 906, by the so-called *henotikon*, or tome of union.

[58] See C. Valenziano, "Costanti e varianti in celebrazioni coniugali di culture cristiane," in *La celebrazione del matrimonio cristiano.* Atti della V settimana di studio dell'associazione professori di liturgia (Como, Sept. 5–10, 1976) (Bologna, 1977) 298–366.

[59] J. H. Erickson, "Oikonomia in Byzantine Canon Law," in K. Pennington and R. Somerville, *Law, Church and Society: Essays in Honor of Stephan Kuttner* (Philadephia, 1977) 225–236; P. L'Huillier, "The Indissolubility of Marriage in Orthodox Law and Practice," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 32 (1988) 199–221.

[60] Canon of St. Basil (P.-P. Joannou, *Discipline Générale Antique (IV^e–IX^e s),* vol. 2: *Les canons des Pères Grecs* (Grottaferrata, 1963) 101. To a young widow on only one marriage, SC 138 (Paris, 1968), ed. G. H. Ettlinger and B. Grittet.

[61] *Letters* 22 and 31 (*Theodori Studitae Epistulae,* 58–59 and 147).

[62] For example, *Barberini gr.* 336 (8th cent.), *St. Petersburg gr.* 226, and *Sinai gr.* 957 (10th cent.); in *Sinai gr.* 973 (1152/53) the prayer for second marriages does not immediately follow the marriage rites, a sign that it is a recent addition (A.Dmitr, 2:126).

It allowed three marriages at most, under specific conditions.[63] It is probably after this provision that we find for the first time a prayer expressly for διγαμία in the euchologion *Paris Coislin* 213 (Constantinople, 1027).[64] This prayer was to spread and in turn give rise to a special rite with additional prayers.[65] Like married deacons in the Roman Church, married deacons and presbyters in the Byzantine Churches are prohibited from a second marriage, even if they are widowed.

7. The Marriage Rites Today

Save for very rare exceptions, betrothal and marriage are always celebrated together. According to the *textus receptus,* which was established in printed form in the sixteenth century,[66] betrothal takes place at the doors of the church, where the celebrant hands the couple a lighted candle. The deacon sings a litany with prayer intentions adapted to the occasion, and the celebrant recites the two Byzantine prayers for betrothal, the same ones found in the *Barberini* euchologion. Next follows the exchange of rings on the part of the celebrant, then the witnesses, with the formula: "The servant of God, *N.,* is betrothed—or better—pledges to marry (ἀρραβωνίζεται) the handmaid of God. . . ."[67] The exchange of rings is followed by a long prayer. A late creation, it is obtained by joining the Alexandrian prayer for the "monetary gifts" of *Sinai gr.* 973 (1152/53) with another provincial prayer that appears in the fifteenth century.[68] The rite concludes with the litany of supplication and the dismissal. Between betrothal and marriage the Slavic Churches place the request for consent.[69]

[63] L. G. Westerink, "Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Miscellaneous Writings," *Dumbarton Oaks Texts* 6 = *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 20 (Washington, 1981) 59–71.

[64] A.Dmitr, 2:1017.

[65] For Byzantine Italy, I mention by way of example only *Ottoboni gr.* 344 (Otranto, 1177) f. 190r, and *Oxford Bodleian Auct. E.*5.13 (A. Jacob, *Un euchologe du Saint-Sauveur,* no. 12); for the Orient consult the index in A.Dmitr, 2:14 (separate page numbers at the end of the volume).

[66] Reprinted in Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum,* 310–312, 314–320, 328–331 and, except for minor details, in all modern editions.

[67] It appears, for example, in *Sinai gr.* 966 (1566), A.Dmitr, 2:795; note also the search for symmetry with the nuptial formula (στέφεται . . .).

[68] For example, *Istanbul Holy Sepulcher* 8 (182) and *Athos Pantokrator* 149 (A.Dmitr, 2: 459 and 488).

[69] S. V. Bulgakov, *Nastolnaja kniga dlja Sviascenno-cerkovno sluzitelej* (Charkov, 1900) 2:1154.

The betrothed couple and the celebrant, followed by the guests, enter the church to the singing of Psalm 127 (Constantinople). After the opening blessing and another litany by the deacon, the celebrant recites three presidential prayers. The first is the crowning prayer from *St. Petersburg gr.* 226 and *Sinai gr.* 958. The present third prayer corresponds to the one prayer of Constantinople, and is still today immediately followed by the nuptial crowning. The second prayer, similar to the first in content and literary form, is almost unknown even in the late manuscript tradition.[70]

The crowning follows, using the mixed formula στέφεται . . . (provinces) and Psalm 8:6b (Constantinople). Next, according to the Oriental model, come the readings (Ephesians 5:20-33 and John 2:1-11), the deacon's litany, the second Constantinople prayer (no longer a prayer for the bowing of the head), another litany, and the Our Father. The last two elements were originally to prepare for holy communion and have been kept, even though for centuries communion has no longer been given. Instead, the blessing of the common cup, from which the spouses drink three times, has acquired great importance.[71]

At this point the spouses, led by the celebrant, perform what modern liturgical commentators call a "liturgical dance" to the singing of hymns in honor of the Mother of God, the martyrs, and the apostles. No matter how much this walk around the Analogion, on which lies the Gospel book, may somehow resemble a "liturgical dance," we can conclude from history that the Byzantine ritual for marriage never envisioned such a "dance." By analogy with the baptismal "dance," this is really a ritualization of what was once a true procession.[72] With its

[70] It is still missing in the euchologion *Athos Vatopedi* 134 *(745)* from 1538 (A. Dmitr, 2: 784); however, certain passages in the prayer are traceable to the codex *Athos Lavra* 189 (13th cent.), an alternate prayer for the cup (A.Dmitr, 2:183).

[71] Among the reasons that led to the suppression of communion for the spouses, disparity of cult may have been a contributing factor. Here we must remember that until a few years ago the only marriage recognized as valid by the marriage laws of the Republic of Greece was that celebrated in the Orthodox Church. Even non-Orthodox and non-Christians were bound to this.

[72] The subject of liturgical dance is especially dear to Orthodox writers: E. Theodorou, "La danse sacrée dans le cult chrétien et plus spécialement dans la famille liturgique byzantine," *Gestes et paroles dans les diverses familles liturgiques,* BELS 14 (Rome, 1978) 285–300; C. Andronikof, "L'alliance et les alliances," *Le Mariage,* 29–38, and N. Lossky, "Sens trinitaire de la liturgie orthodoxe du mariage," *Le Mariage,* 215–221.

suppression, the prayers formerly recited in the home of the spouses are now said in church, and the removal of the crowns also takes place in church. This is followed by some formulas of blessing and the dismissal.[73]

The historical vicissitudes of the Byzantine marriage rites are no different from those of other elements of this tradition. In the provinces the liturgical traditions of the Orient (Syria and Egypt) strongly influenced the primitive structure of Constantinople. Prayers were multiplied, and with them the symbolic interpretation of the rites. On the other hand, the three-dimensional aspect (processions) was reduced and holy communion was no longer an integral part of the rite. Of the many dozens of these local rituals, only one was privileged to see print in the sixteenth century and de facto suppressed the others. This local ritual, whose origins we do not fully know, is Byzantine marriage, only minimally an heir to the tradition of Byzantium.

According to the prescriptions of the present liturgical books, betrothal (and thus marriage) should be celebrated at the end of the Eucharistic liturgy. Thus, at least in theory, the traditional link between marriage and the Eucharist is safeguarded. In fact, this very seldom happens except in Eastern Catholic Churches. There it is not so much from fidelity to the rubrics—which they usually disregard—as from the desire for a "wedding Mass" after the Roman model. There are also attempts along these lines in some Orthodox Churches which have tried to combine the Eucharistic liturgy with the celebration of marriage. But the results are rather debatable.[74] More and more often, marriage is celebrated in the evening, and given the strict Eucharistic fast, any pastoral attempt to restore communion with the Presanctified Gifts is doomed to failure. Yet the Eucharist remains the most constant element in the manuscript tradition of Byzantine marriage. On this note we would like to end with a pertinent statement of this position by the Orthodox theologian Schmemann:

The common cup given to the couple after the crowning is explained today as a symbol of "common life," and nothing shows better the "desacramentalization" of marriage, its reduction to a "natural

[73] Among the manuscripts see *Istanbul Holy Sepulcher* 68 (16th cent.), A.Dmitr, 2:814.

[74] A French translation of this will be found in D. Guillaume, trans., *Grand Euchologe et Arkhiératikon* (Parma, 1992) 807–814.

happiness." In the past this was communion, the ultimate seal of the fulfillment of marriage in Christ. Christ is to be the very essence of life together.[75]

[75] A. Schmemann, "The Mystery of Love," *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy,* 2nd ed. (Crestwood, N.Y., 1973) 81–94, especially 91.

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14

The Christian Rite of Marriage in the West

INTRODUCTION

Treatment of the sacrament of marriage requires a twofold approach, and in fact the theological and anthropological approach taken in the West differs from that taken in the East. The approach depends, moreover, on the various social and cultural factors that exert a great influence on this sacrament.

In the West, the essence of the sacrament consists in the mutual exchange of consent by the two spouses before witnesses. Its validity also depends on the ability to perform a complete sexual act *(potestas coeundi)*. Consequently, the origin of the ritual history of Christian marriage in the West is not to be sought mainly or exclusively in Scripture, but in the social customs and practices of the time and place in which Christians live. In the first century, the *Letter to Diognetus* states that Christians marry like everyone else.[1] In the West the principal ministers of the sacrament are the spouses themselves, who promise mutual fidelity in the presence of witnesses. Although the Verona Sacramentary provides a Mass for the spouses with the *velatio sponsae*,[2] we cannot find a properly structured ritual for this sacrament before the eleventh century, when the celebration took place before the door of the church.[3] Although Christians may have used special prayers for the celebration of marriage even before the fourth century, we have no

[1] *Letter to Diognetus,* 5, 6. Ed. H. Marrou, SCh 33bis, 62–63.

[2] *Ve* 1105–1110.

[3] This does not mean that there was no prayer or Christian rite, only that we know of no text prior to this period except for the Mass and the blessing of the bride.

evidence of a sacramental rite. Thus in our study we will need to distinguish carefully between the sacrament of marriage and the rites and prayers inherent in the sacrament itself.

In the East things are very different. The principal minister of the sacrament is Christ represented by the priest, who not only blesses the marriage, as in the West, but also acts as minister of the grace of the sacrament. Thus, besides the consent of the spouses, the priest's blessing is a central and essential act in the formation of the sacramental bond. When the priest blesses the spouses, he acts not only ritually, that is, with a formal gesture; on the contrary, when he invokes the Spirit he is really minister of the divine mystery that takes place in the sacrament. In the East neither a deacon nor a lay person can replace the priest. The marriage is complete when the sacrament has been conferred by a priest. Thus in the East it is hard to distinguish between a non-consummated marriage *(ratum)* and a consummated marriage *(consummatum)*. Canon 1061 of the Western Code has no counterpart in the Oriental Code, which refers to non-consummated marriage only in passing in canon 862, when speaking about the possible dissolution of a marriage.[4]

The divisions in our treatment of marriage in the West are dictated by three important stages in the development of the rite: (1) marriage in the family home until the eleventh century, with the first interventions of the priest being the Mass and the blessing of the bride; (2) marriage *in facie ecclesiae* in the eleventh century, the first clear evidence of the rite of the sacrament itself, followed by the Mass and nuptial blessing already used before; (3) the rite introduced by Vatican II: the celebration of the sacrament after the Liturgy of the Word, the blessing, which is now addressed to both spouses, and an epiclesis of more recent introduction.

I. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE BEFORE THE TENTH CENTURY

1. *Christian Marriage Before the Fourth Century*

a) In partial harmony with Greco-Latin culture

Especially in Rome, Greco-Latin culture had managed to infiltrate not only everyday life but also special moments in the lives of Christians. This involved, in the first place, the more important customs of the

[4] J. Prader, *Il matrimonio in Oriente e in Occidente* (Rome, 1992). Reviewed by R. Metz in *Revue de droit canonique* 45 (1995) 1:170–172.

society, such as those surrounding marriage. Hence we must briefly recall the marriage practices found in these cultures.

Among the Orientals, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, we need to consider two distinct and separate moments in time: betrothal and marriage. As we shall see, these distinctions can already be found in Scripture.

For the Greeks, we have early evidence from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as well as from a number of more specific references, about customs and practices in the city of Athens during the classical era.[5] Betrothal consisted in a meeting between the suitor and the girl's father, not only to agree on the formalities of the marriage ceremonies but especially to agree on the dowry. This element will be found in the first rituals of the Latin Church. The dowry is an advance payment on the girl's inheritance and remains her property; the husband has only the right to its usufruct. It is rightly believed that these practices may be connected to Semitic customs. In fact, the Greeks adopted writing from the Semites (the Phoenicians) around the ninth century B.C.[6] Thus the ἐγγύσις is an admission into the family and a mutual engagement.

For the Romans, there is more evidence than we can possibly attempt to present.[7] Like the Jews and Greeks, the Romans also had a betrothal, which for them was clothed in a true and proper legal form. The two family heads arrived at a *stipulatio,* which at the time of the empire would become a true contract. Noble families celebrated the betrothal with a banquet. Thus it was question of an engagement and a monetary gift. The formula "Do you promise?"—"I promise" *(Spondes—Spondeo)* emphasizes this pledge. Later there was added the joining of hands *(dexterarum iunctio),* for which we have evidence from the first century B.C. Pliny mentions the sending of an iron ring, or *ferreus anulus,* without precious stones.[8]

All this was part of the betrothal. After a period of time, attested by the Old and New Testaments, by Jewish customs, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, the marriage was celebrated.

[5] P. Dacquino, *Storia del matrimonio cristiano alla luce della Bibbia* (Turin, 1984) 72–73; K. Ritzer, *Le mariage dans les Églises chrétiennes du I^er^ au XI^e^ siècle*, LO 45 (Paris, 1970) 63.

[6] Dacquino, *Storia del matrimonio cristiano,* 76, n. 11.

[7] Ibid., 87–131; Ritzer, *Le mariage,* 71–79.

[8] Ritzer, *Le mariage,* 72, n. 119.

Among the Greeks marriage involved the following. (1) A sacrifice was offered to the tutelary deities of marriage: Zeus, Apollo, Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite; the sacrifice was originally offered by the bride's father, but later this would be done by the priests and priestesses. (2) A banquet followed during which the spouses wore a crown of either myrtle or metal on their head. (3) The bride was given to the groom (ἔκδοσις) by the bride's father in the late evening. This also involved the crowning of the spouses and an impressive torch-light procession that led them to the groom's house with songs and music. (4) The groom's parents welcomed the bride, who was crowned again, this time with fruits, such as dates and figs, and nuts, symbols of fertility and prosperity. The two spouses, holding hands, walked around the hearth. (5) Then they were led by their relatives and friends to the bridal chamber, where they ate a quince, a symbol of fertility. The groom then unfastened the bride's cincture. The guests retired amid loud shouts to drive away the evil spirits.

We find similar practices among the Romans but, like the betrothal, strongly characterized by elements of a juridic nature. The day before the solemnities began, the bride-to-be consecrated her playthings and girl's clothing to the Lares. She donned a *tunica recta,* a white robe that fell straight down and was tied at the waist with a wool cord. Her hair was arranged in six braids held with ribbons of wool interwoven with red and white threads. The bride-to-be also wore the *flammeum,* a fiery red bridal veil, and a crown of flowers she herself had picked.[9] The wedding might be celebrated in two ways.

In the *confarreatio,* at first celebrated only among noble families of the city, a wheat cake *(farro)* was consecrated to Jupiter and eaten by the spouses as a sign of communion. A priest would offer sacrifice to Jupiter in one of the temples dedicated to that deity. Ten witnesses had to be present at the celebration. The banquet in the bride's house began around five in the evening. A steward was in charge of the banquet, as we see in the wedding at Cana (John 2:8). The guests apparently wore wreaths of flowers on their heads. During the prayers said by the priests, the two spouses were seated on two seats, joined together and with a veil over their heads, a rite perhaps borrowed from the typically Jewish practice of the *huppa,* or wedding canopy. The *dexterarum coniunctio,* so important in the rite of marriage, had already

[9] Ibid., 75–76.

taken place at the time of the betrothal. We have no clear evidence whether or not it may have been repeated, but it seems it should not be confused with the gesture of the *pronuba* who brought the spouses together.[10] After the banquet, preparations were made for the *domum deductio:* the bride was carried by her husband into his house, whose doorposts had been rubbed with fat and decorated with wool ribbons. Then she was led into the bridal chamber, where a matron or the mother would seat or lay her on the bed. The groom unfastened her cincture and all the guests withdrew. The next day the new bride donned matron's robes and a second banquet was celebrated, but not before the bride had offered sacrifice to the Lares and Penates.

The *coemptio,* much simpler, consisted in the suitor's giving a sum of money to the family of the bride. This gesture took place in the presence of at least five witnesses. For the rest, the rites were those just described, but characterized by a certain sobriety.

As the *Letter to Diognetus* states, Christians followed these same rites except for anything that might be contrary to the mentality and moral demands of Christianity.

b) In harmony with Scripture

From the very beginning of the Church, Christians were certainly aware of the thinking of the Old Testament and the teaching of the evangelists, Paul, and other New Testament authors on Christian marriage. Although there are references in Christian practice to Old and New Testament marriage customs, we have also had to consider the customs of the Jewish, Greek, and Latin cultures, with which Christians were necessarily in frequent contact.

1*) The Old Testament*. Judges 14:11 and 1 Maccabees 9:37-39 mention legal negotiations that precede the marriage by several months. Genesis 24, Tobit 8, and 1 Samuel 25:39-42 are aware that exceptions exist when the future marriage offers guarantees that it is in accord with God's will. Among these negotiations is mentioned the *mohar,* money paid by the future groom to the girl's father (Gen 34:12; Exod 22:16; 1 Sam 18:25; Hos 3:2). The story of Jacob, who served Laban seven years without pay in order to obtain Rachel as his wife, is well known (Gen 29:18).

[10] For the various interpretations, see Dacquino, *Storia del matrimonio cristiano,* 139–142, whose interpretation seems sound and well-founded.

2*) The New Testament.* In the New Testament, we note the case of Joseph and Mary "before they lived together" in Matthew 1:18. There is also "the friend of the bridegroom" who intervenes during the period between the betrothal and the marriage (John 3:29).

We find traces of facts that show, as the *Letter to Diognetus* said, that Christians followed the common customs. The bride is waiting to enter her husband's house (Rev 21:2; 22:17). There is the image of the wedding banquet (Matt 22:2; Rev 19:7, 9). The evening torch-light procession to the house of the groom is also mentioned (Matt 25:1). It was normal for the Christians of Palestine, like the Jews in the Diaspora, to continue to use Jewish customs. At Corinth and Ephesus, but also no doubt throughout Greece, Christians followed the rites according to the practices of the time. The only things to be avoided were those incompatible with the beliefs and moral demands of Christianity. As long as they avoided the pagan sacrifice prescribed for such occasions and refrained from intemperate excess, Christians could follow the other practices.

Some are surprised that for three centuries Christians followed the customs of their time and city, neither calling upon the priest nor using any special prayers for such an important occasion. They would find such a situation quite unthinkable. The fact that we know of no specifically Christian celebration of marriage, crowned with rites and prayers, does not mean it did not exist, only that no traces of a special Christian ritual have come down to us.

Struck by the absence of such prayers, some have begun to take a closer look at ecclesiastical writings from the first three centuries. The texts suggested are not convincing, not even the text of Tertullian, whose analysis by P. Dacquino seems very subjective.[11] A patristic text must be seen in its historical context. First we must face the fact that Tertullian would be the only one from his time to testify to a liturgical intervention. Then we must remember that Tertullian's primary concern in his works is mixed marriages. He gives some very concrete examples of the hardships a Christian woman married to a pagan could

[11] *Unde sufficiamus ad enarrandam felicitatem eius matrimonii quod ecclesia conciliat, et confirmat oblatio et obsignat benedictio, angeli renunciant, pater rato habet? Nam nec in terris filii, sine consensu patrum rite et iure nubunt. Ad uxorem* 2, 8, 6; CCL 1, 393; H. Crouzel, "Deux textes de Tertullien concernant la procédure et les rites du mariage chrétien," *ButLitEc* 74 (1973) 3–13.

encounter, and he encourages women who want to remarry to marry a Christian.[12] It seems hard to interpret the words *quod ecclesia conciliat* as anything but marriage between Christians, which the Church favored, and it is hard to see how this could refer to some liturgical intervention. Nor is it by any means obvious that the words *confirmat oblatio* refer to a blessing conferred during the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Although we find little or nothing typically Christian in the rites, biblical revelation did introduce (besides the celebratory details mentioned above) a new way of viewing marriage on an ideological plane. But even then, biblical revelation remains within the sociological milieu in which it takes place. Thus, for example, polygamy remains, even though monogamy was revealed from the very moment the human couple was created. Yet, on an ideological and ritual plane, the sacredness of sexuality acquires an absolutely new basis at the moment of biblical revelation. Until then the East had sacralized sexuality in myths that expressed people's experiences in society, their relationships with the deities and cosmic forces. As a result, the sexuality of the gods and their fertility were the archetype of human sexuality, inasmuch as procreation was linked to creation. The myths of the father-god and the mother-goddess sacralized human sexuality. The purpose of the rites was to reproduce the action of the god as idealized in the myth. For example, the marriage of a god was represented by the king, who, in the name of the entire city, would have relations with a priestess. This magical act ensured an abundant harvest for the whole year and the regular return of the seasons.

Biblical revelation puts an end to these myths. Two Old Testament texts, otherwise very much like the extra-biblical writings, highlight the radical change brought about by revelation. The first text, Genesis 2 (J source), written around the eighth century B.C., shows the couple in their sexual union, and this in a climate where polygamy reigns. The second text, Genesis 1:27-31 (P source), written in the sixth century, stresses fertility and the blessing of God. The couple do not remain enclosed within the limits of their interpersonal relationships, but their fertility confers on them a social function.

Grelot distinguishes various stages in this biblical revelation. We will attempt to summarize his ideas under four headings.

[12] *Ad uxorem*, 2, 9; CCL 1, 393.

a) Sacred Scripture presents us with one or the other couple in pre–eighth-century tradition. Here fertility occupies the first place. Since it is a question of establishing a people, the chief concern is posterity (Gen 1:22). The wife lives under the despotic rule of her husband (Gen 2:16). But feelings of love are also present (Gen 29:20-30, 31). Although the figure of the man predominates, the dignity of the woman is also acknowledged (Ps 45). Some passages, such as 2 Samuel 16:21, recall the continuing practice of concubinage, while 1 Samuel 1:5 stresses the love between the couple. Physical love is secondary to love of the heart. This is a realistic view, but it is also utilitarian, since the couple is called to collaborate in establishing a people. Not everything is easy in the couple's life; often there is suffering. Genesis 3 describes this painful situation, in which both spouses experience their inner disorder.

b) At the time of the prophets, marriage finds its archetype in the covenant. Even though this gives marriage a juridic aspect, it is also true that the notion of the covenant takes us well beyond legalism. If the covenant signifies God's love and fidelity (Exod 34:6-7; Deut 7:7-8), these same qualities are required of Israel (Deut 6:4; Hos 4:2; 6:6). Thus the covenant is also a model of love. From now on fertility no longer occupies the first place. Hosea seems to have originated this parallelism between covenant and marriage, and chapter 2 of his book describes the relationship between Israel and her God as a relationship between husband and wife. Isaiah (5:1-7; 54:1-10), Jeremiah (2:1; 3:4; 31:21-22), and Ezekiel (16:23) develop the same idea. If on the one hand the prophets envision a covenant that is perfect, though imperfectly realized, like the imperfect union of husband and wife, on the other hand they foresee the perfect, eschatological union. This is an important advance.

c) In the postexilic period the theme of indissolubility that goes beyond the law is developed (Mal 2:14-16). Everything must contribute to fidelity; therefore the adulteress and seducer must be put away (Prov 5:1-14; 7:1-27). The pleasures of love have their place only in the context of fidelity (Prov 5:15-19). The Old Testament also gives us the portrait of a perfect wife (Prov 31) and the model of the good and the bad wife (Sir 26:1-18). The Book of Tobit goes beyond the couple's problems and their marriage and is concerned with their salvation. In their human situation the couple must face a demon (Tob 6:14-15),

but Sarah will be saved by Tobiah (Tob 6:18). The love between Tobiah and Sarah is chaste, and is sanctified by prayer and continence for three days after their marriage.

d) Without going into the question of possible stages in its composition, the Canticle of Canticles offers us an important theology of marriage. The joys of physical love are optimistically described. Fertility is not mentioned, but the life of the couple is presented in a paradisiac atmosphere with no hint of suffering, as if the couple described had reached the eschatological ideal of unity, restored and rediscovered in marriage.

In the New Testament and in the early Church, married life is no longer seen merely as the archetype of God's love for his people and the people's love for their God, an ideal to be achieved in marriage. Instead, this ideal has become a present reality that unites God and humanity in a perfect covenant. The status of the baptized is changed, since Christ has achieved the perfect covenant in his blood. The prophets foretold the covenant as an ideal to be realized; the New Testament and the early Church proclaim it as a present reality. The nuptial theme occurs several times. In the *Benedictus* antiphon at Lauds for the feast of Epiphany we sing: "Today the Bridegroom claims his bride, the Church, since Christ has washed her sins away in Jordan's waters; the Magi hasten with their gifts to the royal wedding; and the wedding guests rejoice, for Christ has changed water into wine."

St. John, in the episode of the wedding at Cana (2:1-11), gives us some very interesting details. The jars filled with water remind us of the Jewish purifications and the old covenant; but now they contain wine, a sign of the new covenant in the blood of Christ. In the Book of Revelation, harking back to the nuptial theme, John applies it to the Lamb (Rev 21:3-4). There the wedding rite is described: the bride is adorned and presented to her husband (21:2, 9). Humanity is represented by a woman and by a city, the heavenly Jerusalem (21:2, 10-27), already foretold by Ezekiel (40) and Isaiah (54, 60–62). In the Gospels Christ applies the wedding theme to himself (Matt 9:15; Mark 2:19-20; Luke 5:34-35). The kingdom is the nuptial mystery of Christ the bridegroom (Matt 8:11).

Marriage in the new covenant is presented by Christ to his disciples as a reality that surpasses the "hardness of heart" that had given legal

permission to dismiss one's wife. The spouses are one flesh, united by God himself (Matt 19:6). The disciples realize that the married life is not easy (Matt 19:10). Only by the grace of God can the spouses attain a certain balance in the sexual life of marriage. This absolute statement, however, does not preclude mercy. The adulteress is forgiven (John 8:3-9). Christ came to call sinners (Mark 2:1-17; Luke 15; 18:9-14). Sinners and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God ahead of the Pharisees (Matt 21:31-32).

In his letter to the Ephesians (5:21-32), St. Paul presents the catechesis he addressed to his Church. The interpretation of the words *sacramentum hoc magnum, ego autem dico, in Christo et in Ecclesia* (Eph 5:32) is not obvious. Not even today do scholars completely agree as to its meaning. It should be noted that the Oriental liturgies do not use this Pauline reading in the liturgy for marriage but interpret the *sacramentum magnum* as referring exclusively to the union between Christ and the Church. In the West, especially when the missal of Pius V was promulgated in 1570, the letter to the Ephesians was favored, and the other readings offered by local liturgies at the time were dropped. As we shall see, the modern lectionary offers a very rich selection of readings. But the letter to the Ephesians, whose commentary is not without difficulties, also remains.[13]

Although this is not the place to deal with the problem directly, we think it necessary to offer some reflections as an aid to pastors who must comment on the lectionary for the rite of marriage. The *sacramentum magnum* seen as referring to the Christ-Church union has its supporters among Catholic and Protestant exegetes. For them, the "great mystery" refers to marriage because of its sign value with respect to the union between Christ and the Church. For Paul, Christian marriage seemed to be a sacrament in itself, given its link with the eschatological couple, Christ-Church. It is not marriage that has been transformed but its protagonists, the baptized, who have become fundamentally different. They have put on Christ, so their attitude must conform to the archetype, Christ-Church. Baptized into Christ (Rom 6:3), they belong to the couple of the new Adam. Henceforth there is established between them not only a juridic bond, like that which binds Adam and Eve, but every Christian truly shares in the

[13] For Dacquino's explanation, see *Storia del matrimonio cristiano,* 620–631; for the patristic interpretations, ibid., 582–619.

Christ-Church mystery. Thus their marriage relationship benefits from the superiority of the union of the new couple, Christ-Church. When Paul says that a widow who would remarry must "marry in the Lord" (1 Cor 7:39), he is not merely excluding marriage with an infidel. Based on these considerations, would it not be legitimate to interpret Paul's words "The husband is head of the wife" as reflecting a social situation of his time and place?

2. *Christian Marriage from the Fourth to the Tenth Century*

Although the liturgy of marriage retains many practices of the time following the Peace of Constantine, it now offers us clear evidence of typically Christian elements. These elements fall into two categories: the *velatio nuptialis* in Rome and Milan, and the *benedictio in thalamo* in Gaul, Spain, and the Celtic countries. This fourth-century evidence does not necessarily mean that before then Christians had not introduced elements to express their faith, but only that we have no clear positive evidence that can be objectively interpreted.

a) First traces of blessing and veiling

Ambrosiaster was the first writer to mention a blessing in church. But despite much research, we are not sure just who he was.[14] He seems to have lived at the time of Pope Damasus (366–384). He was well acquainted with Jewish customs and wrote: *Quomodo ergo dici potest male fieri aut non licere, quod ex Dei benedictione et eo favente augmentum facit? Cuius rei traditio et in synagoga mansit et in ecclesia celebratur ut Dei creatura cum Dei benedictione iungatur. Non utique per praesumptionem quia ab ipso Creatore sic data est forma.*[15]

The text alludes to the blessing but also to the synagogue celebration, in which the rite of the *huppa* was used. This leads us to believe that in the Churches of Rome and Milan the rite of the *velatio* may have been related to this synagogue rite.

Without giving a detailed development of the rites, Pope Siricius and St. Ambrose refer to the *velatio*.

Pope Siricius (384–399) wrote to the Church of Milan and to other Churches: *Nos sane nuptiarum vota non aspernanter suscipimus, quibus velamine intersimus, sed virgines, quas nuptiae creant Deo devotas maiore*

[14] A. Pollastri, "Ambrosiaster," *DPAC* 156–158.

[15] *Liber questionum Veteris et Novi Testamenti*; CSEL 50, 400, 11–14.

honorificentia numeramus.[16] In a letter of 385 to Imerius, bishop of Tarragon, Siricius wrote: *De coniugali autem velatione requisisti, si desponsatam alii puellam alter in matrimonium possint accipere: Hoc ne fiat modis omnibus inhibemus, quia illa benedictio quam nupturae sacerdos imponit, apud fideles cuiusdam sacrilegii instar est, si ulla transgressione violetur.*[17]

In this letter to Imerius, the importance of the *velatio* is strongly emphasized as a quasi-sacramental rite, and the priest's presence is expressly mentioned in various texts.

For example, in *Letter* 20 to Virgilius, bishop of Trent, written in 385, Ambrose writes: *Nam cum ipsum coniugium velamine sacerdotali et benedictione sanctificanti oporteat, quomodo potest coniugium dici, ubi non est concordia.*[18]

We find a possible reference by Ambrose to the blessing and veiling in his *Hexameron*.[19]

We must wait until St. Paulinus of Nola, around 403, to learn the details of the celebration. He composed an epithalamium for the marriage of the reader Julian, future bishop of Eclanum and son of Memorius, the bishop of Benevento, to the daughter of Emilius, the bishop of Capua. Julian's father led the couple to the altar while the girl's father, Bishop Emilius, imparted the nuptial blessing to the two spouses, whose heads were covered with a veil.[20]

But, as we have already emphasized, this Christian liturgy does not abolish the legal customs of which St. Ambrose wrote: *Facit coniugium pactio coniugalis.*[21]

Assuming as proven the hypothesis that Tertullian was acquainted with a liturgical blessing for marriage, we can see that Christians continued to observe the pagan customs. In his *Apologeticum* he refers to

[16] P. Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1881–1888) no. 260; PL 116:1171.

[17] PL 84:632. Ignore the variant *violatione* in place of *velatione*, restored in the Dyonisiana: PL 67:231.

[18] PL 16:984.

[19] *Hexameron*, 5, 18; CSEL 30, 238–245: *. . . eodem iugo benedictionis utriusque colla sociantur, etiamsi alter obeat separatarum regionum longa divortia, quia non corporis cervice, sed mentis iugum gratiae receperunt.*

[20] Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 25, 199–232; CSEL 30, 244–245. See Ritzer, *Le mariage,* 419–420.

[21] *De institutione virginum*, 6: PL 166:330.

the ring sent by the groom to the bride before their wedding. This ring was normally of iron and without precious stones.[22] Tertullian is also familiar with the iron ring,[23] the use of the veil, which he would like to see worn by all women, whether married or not,[24] the *dexterarum coniunctio*,[25] and the kiss of the spouses. He also refers to the *tabellae nuptiales*[26] and carefully distinguishes between the betrothal and the wedding.[27] However, pagan practices were not supposed to lead Christians to acts of idolatry.[28]

b) Formulas for the nuptial blessing and formulas for the wedding Mass

With regard to these blessings, the texts that have been preserved are linked to Mass formulas. This clearly shows that they had been used during the Eucharistic celebration ever since they were written. These texts, despite their place of origin or transcription, are mostly Roman. It is interesting to read the titles chosen for these blessings. The title chosen by the Verona Sacramentary is the most direct and evocative: *Velatio nuptialis*. The Gelasian reads: *Actio nuptialis*. The Hadrianum has borrowed an evocative title: *Orationes ad sponsas velandas*. It is also interesting to note that these titles refer not only to the prayers of blessing but to the entire Mass formula, thus indicating the central place of the *velatio,* even though it is not sacramental. But we shall see how efforts were made to give it more importance.

1) The nuptial blessing in the Verona Sacramentary and its Mass formula

Blessing and Mass formulas are transcribed under the title *Incipit velatio nuptialis*.[29] The Mass formulas are often attributed to St. Leo the Great. They do, in fact, contain the essentials of his theology. This, plus their style, has often caused them to be attributed to St. Leo the Great. The priest is recognized as minister of God's blessing. In the Canon of the Mass, the *Hanc igitur* is devoted entirely to the bride. It prays that she may be fertile and enjoy many years of married life.

[22] *Apologeticum*, 6, 6; CCL 1, 97.
[23] *De cultu foeminarum*, 1, 5; CCL 2, 344.
[24] *De virginibus velandis*, 11, 4; CCL 2, 1221.
[25] *De oratione*, 22, 10; CCL 1, 271.
[26] *De virginibus velandis*, 12, 1; CCL 2, 1221.
[27] Ibid.
[28] *De idolatria*, 16, 1–4; CCL 2, 117.
[29] XXXI, 1105–1110.

The formula of blessing, on the other hand, is very pompous and elaborate. For this reason it is difficult to attribute it to St. Leo as such. The text, as we have it, is full of errors that make it even more difficult. The first part (until the words *quamvis esset caduca posteritas*) is clearly biblical and could be used as a source for catechesis even today: *Pater mundi conditor* (see Gen 1:24); *multiplicandae originis institutor* (see Gen 1:28; 9:1-7); *qui Adae comitem . . . addidisti* (see Gen 2:18-24); *quo totum inter se saeculum colligarent, humani generis foedera nexuerunt* (see Gen 1:28; 9:1-7); *unum efficeret ex duobus* (see Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7-9; Eph 5:28-33). God has given Adam a companion like himself, yet at the same time different. Both form the foundation of a great covenant of the human race. The second part, *Ad haec igitur venturae huius famulae tuae,* prays for the sanctification of the bride, who is reminded of the example of the holy wives of the Old Testament. The entire prayer concludes on an eschatological note.

Although it is impossible to restore this prayer today, we thought it worth mentioning, since it will be borrowed by the Gelasian Sacramentary. When judging this prayer, we must remember that, as far as we know, there was no special rite for marriage; it followed the customs of the time. Perhaps that is why the earlier Church insisted on the blessing of the woman, a blessing that seems almost like a consecration. It must have had a remarkable impact at the time.

2) The nuptial blessing in the Gelasian Sacramentary and its Mass formula

The celebration is entitled *Actio nuptialis,* a title that takes into account the total celebration, unlike the title in the Verona Sacramentary.[30]

The direct object of the prayer is the bride and her fertility, but it also insists on the mutual union of the spouses: *affectu compari, mente consimili, sanctitate mutua*.

The rubric that follows the blessing shows that it was given before the kiss of peace followed by communion. For some time the kiss of peace, which was given before the preparation of the gifts, had been transferred to the moment of the breaking of the bread before communion. On the other hand, the Our Father, recited before communion, had been moved by St. Gregory and placed immediately after the Amen to the doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer. But these changes did not affect things. In any case, the blessing continued to

[30] *GeV* 1443–1455.

be given after the Our Father and, in the high Middle Ages, before the embolism.[31]

What is new in the Gelasian Sacramentary is the introduction of a prayer after communion. This time it mentions both spouses, unlike the prayer of nuptial blessing, which focused on the bride. The *GeV,* of which we have only one copy, was transcribed in Chelles, France, and we know there have been some additions. Could this final prayer perhaps be assimilated to the episcopal blessings given before communion? In that case the prayer would not be of Roman origin.[32] This suggestion does not seem possible, because the episcopal blessings are inserted between the *Libera* and the *Pax Domini*. The prayer is not found in any known collection of episcopal blessings.[33] It could not even be an *Oratio super populum,* since it speaks exclusively of the two spouses.[34] The introduction of a prayer after communion addressed to the two spouses can cause us to reflect. Perhaps the Roman faithful were not satisfied with a blessing formula in which the groom was not mentioned. The reasons deserve study and are important.

The *GeV* has enriched the Mass formulas. It has replaced the opening prayer of the *Ve* by the prayer that introduces the blessing.[35] The prayer after communion of the *Ve* has become the second prayer in the *GeV*.[36] The opening prayer of the *Ve* has become the prayer after communion in the *GeV*.[37] But the *GeV* not only rearranges the prayers of the *Ve*; it also introduces a new prayer over the gifts, a preface that is found in no other book, and a second *Hanc igitur*. The prayer over the gifts introduces a petition: *et hanc oblationem famularum tuarum illarum, quam tibi offerunt pro famula tua illa*. The expression *famulae tuae* no doubt refers to the bridesmaids who aaccompanied the bride. Likewise the words *ad statum maturitatis et ad diem nuptiarum* recall a legal requirement but also allude to the difference between the betrothal and the day of the wedding.[38]

[31] J. Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia* (Turin, 1961) 2:223, n. 88.

[32] K. Ritzer, *Le mariage*, 245, n. 96a.

[33] For the *benedictiones episcopales*, see E. Moeller, *Corpus benedictionum pontificalium*, CCL 162.

[34] A. Chavasse, *Le sacramentaire gélasien* (Paris-Tournai, 1958) 485, n. 36.

[35] *Ve* 1105, 1109; *GeV* 1443.

[36] *Ve* 1108; *GeV* 1444.

[37] *Ve* 1105; *GeV* 1445.

[38] *GeV* 1445.

It seems that the *GeV*, intended for the Roman *tituli*, paid closer attention to the civil customs of the place.

The preface contains an important theology of marriage. It insists, first of all, on the covenant that marriage represents *(foedera nuptiarum)* and the indissoluble bond *(indissolubili pacis vinculo)*, a bond God himself has created *(nexuisti)*. But above all it stresses the end of marriage as a consequence of the covenant that begins with the conjugal act: collaboration in spreading the kingdom by procreating adoptive children *(ut multiplicandis adoptionum filiis sanctorum conubiorum fecunditas pudica serviret)*. This begins, according to the will of God, in the sexual act. The conclusion of the preface also expresses an interesting theology: may that which birth has brought forth to enrich the world lead, by rebirth, to the growth of the Church *(ut quod generatio ad mundi edidit ornatum, regeneratio ad ecclesiae perducat augmentum)*.[39] The *GeV* borrows the *Hanc igitur* from the *Ve* but gives another for the thirtieth day after the wedding and for the anniversary.[40] In its theology the *GeV* certainly represents a step forward in the liturgy for marriage.

3*) The nuptial blessing in the* Hadrianum *and its Mass formula*

The title of the celebration partly restores the title found in the *Ve*, but it extends the image of the *velatio*, reserved for the blessing of the bride, to all the other formulas: *Orationes ad sponsas velandas*.[41] The nuptial blessing of the *GrH* is both an adaptation and a creation. In place of the text of the *Ve* or the *GeV, Pater mundi conditor . . . pignorum custodiae delegatum*,[42] it offers a new and pastorally clearer text[43] recalling the couple's origin and the indissolubility of their union. It presents conjugal union as a covenant intended by God to be a sign of the union between Christ and the Church. Neither sin nor the Flood have abolished the union of man and woman or God's original blessing. The first two-thirds of the prayer of the *Ve* and the *GeV* is replaced by a new prayer, to which is added the last third, taken from the *Ve* and the *GeV*, beginning with the words *fidelis et casta nubat in Christo*.[44] But the *GrH* adds a phrase: *et videant filios filiorum. . . .* It seems we cannot

[39] *GeV* 1446.
[40] *GeV* 1443.
[41] *GrH* 833–839.
[42] *Ve* 1110, p. 140, lines 7–22—*GeV* 1451, p. 209, line 31; p. 210, line 12.
[43] *GrH* 838a.
[44] *GrH* 838b.

identify the author of the first part of the blessing, which is new. Certain variants show that the *GeV* and the *GrH* both depend on the *Ve* but are independent of each other.

The preface of the *GrH* harks back to the (single) preface of the *GeV* but has unfortunately spoiled its theology. Whereas the *GeV* saw the conjugal act as the starting point for the multiplication of the human race, and thus of adoptive children *(fecunditas pudica serviret),* the *GrH* moves from the theological to the moral order and writes *fecunditas pudica servaretur,*[45] a text that will now pass into the sacramentaries and later liturgical books. The *GrH,* like the *Ve,* has no special prayer for the spouses.

It seems important to note how archaeological evidence shows that while the liturgy of the sacrament of marriage is developing, the practices of the country continue to be followed. The cemetery of Commodilla in Rome has a funerary inscription from 390 of a woman who died at the age of twenty-five. The inscription says that she spent seven of those years as "spouse"and lived seven years and eight months as a married woman. This shows that she had celebrated her betrothal at the age of 11 and had been a "spouse" for seven years. A sarcophagus from 382 at Villa Torlonia in Rome depicts the *dexterarum coniunctio*. Behind the spouses, who are joining their right hands, appears Christ. The husband holds the record of the dowry in his left hand, and in front of the engaged couple, on a stand, lies an open evangeliary.[46] No bishop or priest is present. The giving of the young girl to her husband is a gesture performed by the bride's father at the beginning of the wedding celebration.

We note that in certain countries, such as France, the *benedictio thalami* becomes quite important, but this will be discussed elsewhere.

II. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE FROM THE ELEVENTH CENTURY TO VATICAN II

1. *From the Eleventh Century to the Ritual of Paul V* (1614)

a) Marriage in facie ecclesiae

Experience gradually taught that even though the presence of a minister of the Church was not necessary for marriage in the home, there was still need to ensure the canonical liceity of the marriage. The

[45] *GrH* 833, p. 309, lines 3–4—*GeV* 1446, p. 209, lines 2–3.
[46] Notes by Dacquino, *Storia di matrimonio cristiano,* 194.

Church had to at least be informed about the celebration of a marriage within the family. With the growth of cities, the situation was becoming considerably more complicated. How to ensure the public nature of marriage when this could no longer be sufficiently ensured either by the Mass, the nuptial blessing, or the blessing *in thalamo*?

In 1012 a drastic solution to the problem was taken by the synod of the province of Rouen, at which the archbishop Jean d'Avranches presided. Canon 14 of the synod stated: *Item, ut nuptiae in occulto non fiant, neque post prandium; sed sponsus et sponsa ieiuni a sacerdote ieiuno in monasterio benedicuntur, et antequam copulentur, progenies utrorumque diligenter inquiratur.*[47] From that moment on everything changed; the place for the blessing and the marriage is now the church. The obligation to fast indicates that the Mass was celebrated in the morning.

But the French liturgical books, especially in Normandy, do not abandon the previous rites; these are placed before and after the marriage. The *benedictio arrhae,* with the *benedictio anuli,* takes place at the door of the church. The final proclamation of the marriage follows. At that moment, through the priest's questions, the consent of the spouses is expressed publicly before the parish. After the Mass and blessing there are local rites such as the blessing of bread and wine and, in the husband's house, the *benedictio thalami*. And so, although the new law is observed, the particular local customs for the celebration of marriage can still have their place.

By this time there are many particular customs, for example, the manner in which the spouses express their consent and the formulas used. If, for the first time, we can find clear evidence for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage in front of the church, this celebration assumes many different forms that originate in the local culture and popular religiosity. There are lists from which we can learn about these different forms. Edmond Martène, in his *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus,* transcribed many of these practices contained in manuscripts.[48] Certain works inform us about some of these texts and practices.[49]

[47] Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliarum nova et amplissima collectio. Concilia Rothomagensis provinciae*, 20, 34, can. 14. *De ritu nuptiarum ne in occulto fiant* (Graz, 1960–1962).

[48] E. Martène, I. I, c. IX— A.-G. Martimort, *La documentation liturgique de Dom Edmond Martène*, ST 279 (Vatican City, 1978) nos. 690–706.

[49] K. Ritzer, *Le mariage,* Appendix; J. B. Molin and P. Mutembe, *Le rituel du mariage en France du XII^e au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1974); C. Valenziano, "Costanti e varianti in celebrazioni coniugali di culture cristiane," in *La celebrazione del matrimonio cristiano*

b) A few reflections on these rituals

1*) Meaning of the nuptial blessing and the rites in* facie ecclesiae

As far as the rite of the sacrament of marriage is concerned, a study of the manuscripts leads to the observation that the Church kept the marriage contract as known by pagan Rome. As for the blessing of the ring and the manner of giving it, despite the biblical references in the *benedictio thalami*, the ritual for marriage remained juridic. No doubt this aspect was corrected by the readings and blessing inserted into the Eucharistic celebration. Nevertheless, when we examine the various titles given to the celebration of marriage in the manuscripts, these indicate either insensitivity to the theological meaning of the sacrament or uncertainty. In fact, despite marriage *in facie ecclesiae,* some rituals continue to entitle the rite *Ad sponsam benedicendam,* with no suggestion of the consent, the ring given to the bride, etc. Even in certain fourteenth- and fifteenth-century liturgical books this title continues to precede the introduction of marriage *in facie ecclesiae*.[50] There remains, then, a certain vagueness about the rite which (now *in facie ecclesiae*) consists primarily in the consent.

Ivo of Chartres strongly insists on the *consensus* as the basis of marriage. Nevertheless, in a text that may not be his, he expresses the desire for a special gesture of blessing to ensure the sacramentality of the consent. For William of Paris, marriage without the blessing is not sacramental and does not possess the grace intrinsic to the sacrament. At the time of the Council of Trent, and even later, the importance of the blessing would continue to be seen in the same way. The editors of the rituals seem to be concerned about the sacramentality of marriage. In the thirteenth century, Ildebert of Tours sees the essence of marriage in the *consensus*. On the other hand, he compares the sacrament of marriage to baptism: just as the baptismal water is blessed and acquires sacramental efficacy, so the blessing of the priest unites those who wish to marry.[51]

(Bologna, 1977) 299–306; A. Nocent, "Contribution à l'étude du rituel du mariage," in *Eulogia: Miscellanea in onore P. B. Neunheuser*, SA 68, AL 1 (Rome, 1979) 243–266.

[50] For example, in the Pontifical of Sens, eleventh century, Paris, B.N. ms. lat. 962; Pontifical of Sens, Brussels, Bibl. Royale ms. 391 (9215); Pontifical of Paris from the fifteenth century, Paris, B.N. ms. lat. 138038.

[51] *De ordinatione clericorum, 7*; PL 171:207A: *coniugium fit consensus*. PL 171:928A: *benedictio etiam sacerdotis unit in coniugio duas personas nubentium*.

We could cite various examples of this theology that lays greater stress on the *consensus* yet seems embarrassed at the absence of a blessing that would make this *consensus* sacramental. We have gone from *consensus* celebrated in the family to *consensus in facie ecclesiae*. There are good reasons for thinking that these family rites were repeated in the presence of the Church and the priest, an essential witness of the spouses' faith and desire to give themselves to each other. Although the Eucharistic celebration and nuptial blessing had existed for a long time, the Latin Church kept the same juridic form for the sacrament of marriage as was used for pagan marriage. It must not have been easy at that time, just as it is not easy today, to explain why this human gesture needs anything additional to give it sacramental meaning. According to the *Letter to Diognetus,* it was a most praiseworthy fact that Christians married like everyone else. Why does this act of giving acquire sacramental meaning in the presence of a priest? Why is such meaning necessary for Christians who wish to share their life? The expansion of the ritual *in facie ecclesiae* and that of the *benedictio thalami* could be seen as an answer to these questions. Along the same line, we should note the use of the chants, and often the prayers, from the Mass of the Trinity. These prayers were sometimes added to the proper prayers for marriage.[52]

2) The wedding ring. The monetary gift

At least in Normandy, a ring was blessed and given to the bride. This single ring corresponds not only to biblical practice but has a special meaning in a Christian setting. Christ confers the covenant on his Spouse-Church. The single ring given to the bride does not mean that she alone is bound to fidelity; it is clear that the one who gives it is also bound. But this seems not to have been understood in Germany, where the custom of having the spouses exchange two rings was introduced around the tenth century. Most manuscripts give a rubric with some variations that do not affect its essential nature: *Tunc sacerdos tradat anulum sponso, sponsus autem per manum sacerdotis ponit eum cum primo pollice sponsae dicens.* This rubric will be found in the manuscripts from the eleventh to the fifteenth

[52] For example, Pontifical of Meaux, second half of the twelfth century, Paris, B.N. ms. lat: 1212 nov acq: *Post orationem de Trinitate antequam dicat per omnia sequitur oratio.*

century.[53] In itself the rubric lets us glimpse a theology that goes beyond the juridic aspect. The ring (in French the *alliance,* in Italian the *fede*) is a symbol of the covenant offered by God, of the covenant between Christ and his Spouse-Church. But we must admit that there is no formula for the blessing of the ring that expresses such a theology. The prayer for the blessing of the ring in these manuscripts is strange: *Creator et conservator generis humani* invokes the coming of the Spirit upon the ring. Some manuscripts have corrected the text by adding: *permitte Spiritum tuum super hunc anulum et super famulum tuum et famulam tuam*.[54] Other manuscripts, influenced by the *PRG,* change *Spiritum tuum* to *benedictionem tuam*.[55] In any case, the formula does not refer to any theology of the covenant.

Along with the giving of the ring is the giving of the monetary gift, the sprinkling of the ring with holy water and its incensation. A ritual from the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris is typical: *Postea dicat. Exponite argentum et anulum. Tunc distribuat sacerdos argentum et anulum. Tunc distribuat sacerdos argentum et denarios clericis vel pauperibus secundum consuetudinem villae et patriae. Deinde benedicat anulum argenteum sive aureum sine aliqua lapide*. The thirteenth-century *Ordines* for marriage mention the *dotale,* which is distinguished from the *consensus* and mentioned after the joining of hands. Imperial law was compelled to require an *instrumentum dotale* as proof of *affectus coniugalis*. Evidence of the *consensus* was given in this document. The *instrumentum dotale* takes the name *tabellae nuptiales,* which are the proof of the existence of the marriage. The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *Ordines* mention the *dotale*.[56]

These practices will gradually disappear, although some of them are kept in certain dioceses.

The Council of Trent did not mean to suppress local rituals. The decree *Tametsi,* however, requires that marriage be celebrated in the

[53] For example, Pontifical of Paris or Saint-Denis, eleventh century, Rome, Bibl. Casanate, ms. 1695. Ritual of Saint-André-des-Arts, fifteenth century, Paris, B.N. ms. lat. 1212.

[54] For example, Missal of Paris, thirteenth century, Paris, B.N. ms. lat. 1052.

[55] See A. Nocent, "Contribution à l'étude du rituel du mariage," in *Eulogia: Miscellanea in onore P. B. Neunheuser,* SA 68, AL 1 (Rome, 1979) 251.

[56] See L. Anné, *Les rites de fiançailles et la dotation pour cause de mariage sous le bas- empire* (Louvain, 1941), series 2, vol. 33.

presence of the parish priest for validity,[57] and the formula *Ego coniungo vos* becomes widespread. The ritual of 1614 lays great stress on the role of the priest in the rite of marriage. Now the rite no longer takes place *in facie ecclesiae* but in the church itself, although the marriage itself continues to take place before the celebration of Mass. The rite for marriage has become very simple. The spouses have only to answer "Yes" to the priest's question. The joining of hands follows, with the formula *Ego coniungo vos* and a sprinkling with holy water. Next comes the blessing of the ring, which the groom places on the bride's finger. Some psalm verses follow, and a concluding prayer. The wedding Mass no longer has its own preface or *Hanc igitur*. It does, however, include the nuptial blessing after the Our Father.

3) The wedding Mass

The prayers for the wedding Mass have their origin in the Gregorian Sacramentary. But some manuscripts give two prayers: the first, of the Trinity, the second, from the Gregorian Sacramentary.

After the eleventh century the chants are those of the Mass of the Trinity: *Benedicta sit sancta Trinitas*. Sometimes, however, they were taken from a votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin or even of the Holy Spirit. But the frequent choice of the Mass of the Trinity shows a desire to emphasize the love between the divine Persons as an archetype.

The choice of readings is an important guide to understanding the mentality of an age. Already after St. Gregory the first reading was no longer taken from the Old Testament. But there are exceptions. The Pontifical of Poitiers, for example, suggests Isaiah 61:10, where marriage is praised as "the robe of salvation."[58] Strangely, some missals from Siena suggest as a first reading 1 Corinthians 7:25-34, which praises celibacy and virginity.[59] The Missal of Robert of Jumièges suggests 1 Corinthians 7:2-10, which is a common choice in France, for example in the Pontifical of Amiens.[60] St. Paul, after writing that it

[57] DS 1813–1816. See A. Duval, "La formule «Ego vos in matrimonium coniungo» au concile de Trente," *MD* 99 (1969) 144–153.

[58] A. Martini, *Il così detto Pontificale di Poitiers,* RED, series maior, Fontes 14 (1979) nr 772. Note the chants for the Mass: *Deus patrum vestrorum erit adiutor vester* (Introit).

[59] A. Ebner, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kunstgeschichte des Missale Romanum im Mittelalter: Iter italicum* (Freiburg i. B., 1896; anastatic ed., Graz, 1957, 254–255).

[60] Molin and Mutembe, *Le rituel du mariage,* 213.

is better to marry than to burn with desire, emphasizes the mutual duties of the spouses, stressing their complementarity, even though the husband is head. A Missal of Chartres[61] uses 2 Corinthians 13:13, which recalls mutual love and the grace of the Spirit. Thus it is that many lectionaries distance themselves from the early lectionaries. In fact, the oldest lectionary of the Roman liturgy, that of Würzburg, gives two pericopes: 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 (the two will become one flesh) and 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 (it is hard for spouses to be concerned about the things of the Lord).[62] The Lectionary of Murbach[63] offers as a reading Ephesians 5:22-32, rarely proclaimed during the Middle Ages[64] and never in the Oriental liturgies. But it would be the only reading offered in the missal of 1570.

The gospel pericopes are much more varied. John 3:27-29, which is a difficult text, is proclaimed. It says that the bridegroom is given from heaven; the bridegroom's friend (John the Baptist) is an image of Christ, the bridegroom of the future Church. Matthew 19:1-6, and later its parallel Mark 10:1-9, will insist on the indissolubility of marriage.[65] A passage that is difficult to apply to marriage is Matthew 22:1-4, the banquet given by the king.[66] John 2, the wedding at Cana, is also proclaimed.[67] Although the choice of first readings seems moralizing, the gospel passages diminish this impression.[68]

2. *The Rite of Marriage after Vatican II*

Before the Second Vatican Council, a few tentative revisions were made to the rite of marriage at the request of local churches. Vatican II promulgated a greatly revised ritual, although it left much freedom

[61] Ibid.

[62] G. Morin, "Le plus ancien Comes ou lectionnarie de l'Église romaine," *RBen* 27 (1910) 4–7.

[63] *Comes Murbach*, 26.

[64] It seems to have been borrowed only by the Missal of Troyes, Paris, B.N. ms. lat. 18008.

[65] T. Klauser, *Das römische Capitulare evangeliorum,* vol. 1: *Typen,* LQF 28 (Münster i. W., 1935).

[66] R. Amiet, "Un Comes carolingien de la Haute Italie," *EphLit* 73 (1959) 335–367.

[67] H.A. Wilson. *The Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, HBS 24 (London, 1903) 149–151.

[68] For the choice of readings, see A. Nocent, "Il sacramento del matrimonio: Storia e teologia liturgica," in *La celebrazione del matrimonio cristiano* (Bologna, 1977) 137–139; Idem, "Contribution à l'étude du mariage," op. cit., 248.

for adaptation. Strangely, despite this extraordinary openness to adaptation, few countries have used it, and the ritual is followed practically to the letter. Six points can be said to characterize the renewal as proposed by Vatican II:

a) The rite no longer takes place before the Eucharistic celebration but after the Liturgy of the Word and before the preparation of the gifts.

b) A large selection of suggested readings is given for the Liturgy of the Word.

c) The formula for the promises is more explicit, and another may be used.

d) The ancient preface for marriage has been restored according to the original Gelasian text.

e) The formula for the blessing of the bride is now a blessing of the bride and groom. The former text was revised because some of the Old Testament examples seemed not to have much impact today; other optional formulas are provided.

f) In the new typical edition, which has recently appeared, an epiclesis asking the Father to send the Spirit upon the spouses has been added to the nuptial blessing.

A detailed analysis of the rite is unnecessary; it will be enough to underline the most important points.

After Vatican II the new ritual for marriage was promulgated on March 19, 1969. The new typical edition of 1991 has a fuller introduction and is more attentive to *Gaudium et Spes,* which it cites frequently. In accord with the new Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1983, certain changes have been incorporated into the rites and prayers.

Two choices are offered for welcoming the future spouses. The priest welcomes them at the church door, using one of the two suggested admonitions. Or he can use other similar words. This act of welcome will remain cold and merely formal if the priest has not prepared the future spouses or if he hardly knows them. But the priest may also welcome the future spouses in the sanctuary, perhaps to conform to local custom.

The Liturgy of the Word has become very rich. It is important that the future spouses choose the readings, which should be explained to them so they will be able to listen to them fruitfully. It should be remembered, contrary to a practice that is threatening to spread, that

only biblical (and thus inspired) readings are allowed in this liturgy. The lectionary contains eight Old Testament readings, seven responsorial psalms, ten readings from the apostolic letters, and ten gospel readings. The choices were very perceptive, and the homily, rather than becoming a eulogy of the families and spouses, should be an actualized commentary on the readings. Attention should be paid to their exegetical meaning and their meaning in the context of the liturgy, with concrete and timely applications. The most recent edition of the ritual offers a selection of readings and refers to other suggested readings. There is reason to fear that a superficial look at the ritual might lead to use of the passages immediately suggested, without encouraging a more reflective choice.

The rite of the sacrament itself begins after the homily. Before beginning, the priest may give a prior admonition that stresses the desire of the future spouses to marry before the minister of the Church and the community. There is a reference to loving fidelity and the strength given by Christ to the spouses, already consecrated by their baptism, to fulfill all the duties of married life.

The question that precedes the consent is meant to ensure all the conditions for a valid marriage: complete freedom and the will to love each other for the rest of their lives. If the spouses are still young enough to have children, they are asked about their willingness to accept them according to the law of Christ and the Church.

In the Roman Rite, the *consensus* is central to the sacrament of marriage. During their expression of consent the spouses join their right hands. The introduction allows for the addition of particular local customs. For pastoral reasons, consent may be given through answers to the priest's questions. Using one of two formulas, the priest receives their consent in the name of the Church.

Then the rings are blessed, using one of several formulas; they may also be sprinkled with holy water. The spouses place the rings on each other's ring finger, promising love and fidelity, signified by the ring received.

Only now does the ritual provide for songs and hymns to express the participation of the relatives and friends gathered around the spouses. In some churches there is applause at this point.

After the general intercessions, in which relatives, friends, and the spouses themselves may offer prayers, the bread and wine for the Eucharistic celebration are brought to the altar.

The Eucharistic celebration takes place as usual. However, the Gelasian preface from the *Actio nuptialis* of the *GeV* has been borrowed in its original form. Also borrowed is the *Hanc igitur*. Formulas mentioning the spouses are provided for in the other Eucharistic Prayers.[69]

The nuptial blessing, whose nonsacramental meaning we have seen earlier, includes two other formulas of blessing. The first formula harks back to the *GeV* but with adaptations: now the blessing refers not only to the bride but also to the goom. *SC* 78 desires that not only the bride's obligations but also those of the groom be expressed. This is along the same line as the thinking, mentioned before, regarding the two rings. The Church was right in wanting to stress the equal obligations of husband and wife. In this day and age the Church could not afford to offer a catechesis that would have no impact.

After accepting the fair criticism that the rite of marriage contained no reference to the activity of the Spirit, the second typical edition introduced an epiclesis into the prayers for the blessing of the spouses. This is a step forward. But we might ask whether it really belongs in the blessing of the spouses, which is not, strictly speaking, sacramental. This, it seems to us, raises the blessing to a position of undue importance. Would it not have been better to introduce this epiclesis at the moment of consent, which constitutes the sacrament in which the Spirit acts? Perhaps there was fear of overemphasizing the priest's role in the sacrament of marriage, which, according to the Latin Rite, is conferred by the two spouses. Thus it was preferable to place it during the blessing, a choice we cannot regard as a happy one.

In general, there have been complaints about the lack of participation by the faithful in the rite of marriage. Aware of the situation, competent authority has provided for responses by the faithful when the blessing is given by a lay assistant. The response *Blessed be God* goes with a formula written for use by a lay person who gives the blessing.[70] But it is hard to see why responses by the assembly were not introduced into the other blessing formulas provided for the priest.

The *Ordo* has provided three formulas for the final blessing. The first is of Spanish origin,[71] the second is characterized by a Trinitarian formula, and the third refers to the wedding at Cana.

[69] Ritual, nos. 237–239.

[70] Ritual, nos. 139–140.

[71] M. Férotin, *Le liber Ordinum en usage dans l'Eglise wisigothique et mozarabe d'Espagne du V au XI siècle*, MEL 5 (Paris, 1904; reprint Rome, 1996) 437.

Despite certain points, the ritual for marriage can be offered as a model of openness to creativity and inculturation. It may even be possible to introduce, for example, the rite of the crowning of the spouses.

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Part II

The Sacramentals

A. Consecrated Life

Manel Nin, O.S.B.

15

Monastic Profession in the East

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will present in outline form the rituals for monastic profession in the various Eastern liturgies. The presentation is purely liturgical; the more historical aspects of the formation and development of the various rituals are not treated here. There is also a minimum bibliography for further study.

From the earliest days of monasticism, monastic profession is preceded by a period of testing and formation during which the candidate's fitness is judged and he is formed. There is also a liturgical ritual with special prayers and rites, for example, the change of clothing and the change of name. Fourth-century monastic texts describe a number of rites for entrance into monastic life. These speak of the habit that is given to the monk as well as the prayers said by the superior or spiritual father.[1]

2. BYZANTINE RITE OF MONASTIC PROFESSION[2]

The different Byzantine rituals for monastic profession are found in the different editions of the Euchologion.[3] Nowadays the Byzantine

[1] See *Vita Sancti Pachomii,* PL 73:115; E. Amélineau, *Histoire de saint Pachôme et de ses communautés,* in *Annales du Musée Guimet* (Paris, 1899) t. 77, 349; J. C. Guy, *Jean Cassien: Institutions cénobitiques,* SCh 109 (Paris, 1965) 125, 129; A. and C. Guillaumont, *Évagre le Pontique: Traité pratique ou le moine,* SCh 171 (Paris, 1971) 489; J. Leipoldt, *Schenoute von Atripe* (Leipzig, 1903) 106ff. For a more detailed bibliography and development of the various rituals in the patristic era, see the study by P. Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux de la profession monastique,* Spiritualité Orientale 4 (Bellefontaine, 1992) 11–25.

[2] See Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 27–63.

[3] *BAR* 265–282.

celebration of monastic profession consists of three parts, which need not follow one another: (1) the rasophorate, which is associated with the rite for one who is beginning monastic life; (2) the little habit; and (3) the great habit. In the beginning there was probably just a single rite of profession, but the rituals for the little and great habit already existed by around the eighth century. The ritual for the rasophorate is later, from around the fourteenth century.[4]

a) The rasophorate

This is celebrated in church, before the doors of iconostasis, at the end of the Eucharistic liturgy before the prayer of dismissal. The structure of the rite is simple: prayers; tonsure, in which the candidate's hair is cut in the form of a cross; investiture with the habit (ράσον and καλυμμαύξιον);[5] conclusion of the liturgy. The rite many be celebrated by the priest who has celebrated the Divine Liturgy or by the hegumen, even if the latter is not a priest. In that case the prayers are said by one of the monks who is a priest. The rite of tonsure and investiture is preceded by a series of questions concerning renunciation of the world, the candidate's freedom in his decision, stability, obedience, and chastity.[6]

b) The little habit[7]

In the ritual of the little habit, the candidate receives the μανδύας, a cloak that is different from the ράσον. The rite is celebrated during the Divine Liturgy. The candidate remains in the narthex of the church until the Little Entrance and the singing of the troparia. Then he is led into the church and stands before the iconostasis. The superior of the monastery gives a preliminary instruction to the candidate, then asks a series of questions regarding stability, chastity, obedience, conversion, and poverty. Then the superior gives the candidate a second instruction, recalling that to which he intends to commit himself. This is followed by a series of prayers and another tonsure. Three times the candidate takes the scissors and hands them to the superior, thus stressing obedience to the superior. At the end the newly professed

[4] See Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 32–34.

[5] The ράσον is a kind of wide-sleeved tunic worn by the rasophore; the καλυμμαύξιον is a cylindrical hat usually worn by monks.

[6] See P. Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 35–37.

[7] Ibid., 40–51.

receives the various parts of the monastic habit: tunic, belt, καλυμμαύξιον and μανδύας. The liturgy continues with the singing of a litany. The verse "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" is sung instead of the τρισάγιον. This is to emphasize the connection between profession and baptism. The epistle reading is Ephesians 6:10-17, and the gospel is Matthew 10:37-38 and 11:28-30.

c) The great habit[8]

The great or angelic habit consists of a black scapular and hood, with white embroidered representations of the cross, the instruments of the passion, and some ascetical texts. It is worn by monks only for communion and on their deathbed. The evening before profession the habit is placed on the altar, and there are special prayers during the celebration of ὄρθρος. The rite takes place during the Divine Liturgy and is very much like that for the little labit. But in the ritual for the great habit there is just one instruction by the superior instead of two. The prayers are different but in the same order as in the previous ritual. The readings for the Liturgy are the same.

3. ARMENIAN RITE OF MONASTIC PROFESSION[9]

Monastic profession in the Armenian Rite consists of two parts: one for those who are beginning monastic life, the other for those who are already advanced in the way of perfection.

a) Rite for those who are about to begin monastic life

This ritual consists of two major parts: one at the doors of the church, the other before the altar. The first part includes the recitation of Psalm 24, an interrogation by the superior, and entry into the church accompanied by the singing of Psalms 29, 30, and 31. The second part includes the diaconal litany, prayers and instruction by the superior, tonsure, investiture with the tunic, belt, scapular and sandals, and finally a Liturgy of the Word with the following texts: Psalm 99; Isaiah 56:1-5; Colossians 3:5-17; Psalm 130; Matthew 11:25-30.

[8] Ibid., 52–63.

[9] See G. Amadouni, *Le role historique des moines arméniens*, OCA (Rome, 1958) 279ff.; F. C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum; being the administration of the sacraments and the breviary rites of the Armenian Church, together with the Greek rites of Baptism and Epiphany* (Oxford, 1905) 136–155; Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux*, 65–91.

b) Rite for those who have been initiated into monastic life

This second ritual also consists of two major parts. The first part, which takes place at the door of the church, includes the recitation of Psalms 1, 15, 22, and 26; a prayer by the superior; the recitation of Psalm 24 and the reading of Isaiah 35:3-8; Ephesians 6:10-18; and Matthew 5:1-16; a second prayer by the superior and entry into the church accompanied by the singing of Psalm 45. The second part takes place before the altar. It begins with a prayer by the superior; the recitation of Psalms 41, 42, 37, and 142; a second prayer; the threefold renunciation by the candidate; a first series of readings: Psalm 26; Isaiah 56:1-5; 1 Peter 5:6-11; Psalm 2; John 16:33–17:8. This is followed by an instruction by the superior, the blessing of the habit, the investiture, a litany and a second series of readings: Psalm 83; Lamentations 3:22-45; 1 Peter 2:1-10; 2 Timothy 1:6-14; Psalm 38; Luke 10:17-24. The rite concludes with a final prayer by the superior and a blessing.

4. WEST SYRIAN RITE OF MONASTIC PROFESSION[10]

The rite has two parts and begins with the opening prayers from the West Syrian celebration of the Hours. A whole series of prayers and poetical compositions precedes a long Liturgy of the Word consisting of ten readings, similar to the liturgy of baptism. The readings are Genesis 12:1-9; Numbers 6:1-5, 7-8; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Job 2:22-28; Lamentations 3:25-36; Isaiah 18:1-7; Sirach 2:1-13; 1 Peter 1:13-25; Colossians 3:1-17; Luke 14:25-34; 15:1-7. The first part concludes with an instruction by the superior in which he exhorts the candidate to be faithful to his profession, for its witnesses are the angels themselves. The second part includes the blessing of the candidate and a prayer by the superior; tonsure (always preceded, as in the other liturgies, by the candidate's handing the scissors to the superior); removal of secular clothes; investiture with the tunic, belt, hood, and mantle; the reading of Zechariah 3:1-18; the washing of the feet; the kiss of peace by the superior and the other monks; and the concluding prayers.

[10] O. Heiming, "Der Ordo des heiligen Mönchs Schema in der Syrischen Kirche," *Vom Christlichen Mysterium: Gesammelte Arbeiten zum Gedächtnis von Odo Casel* (Düsseldorf, 1951) 152, 172; J. M. Vosté, *Pontificale iuxta Ritum Ecclesiae Syrum Occidentalium, id est Antiochiae,* Part 3 (Rome, 1942) 299–355; Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 93–111.

5. EAST SYRIAN RITE OF MONASTIC PROFESSION[11]

In the East Syrian liturgy we find two rites for monastic profession: the investiture of a monk and the tonsure of a monk.

a) East Syrian rite of investiture[12]

The rite of investiture of a monk takes place, after a certain period of probation in the monastery, in the church, probably in the bema before the cross and the New Testament. The superior gives an instruction to the candidate and then invests him with the tunic, belt, and mantle, reciting prayers for each article of clothing.

b) East Syrian rite of tonsure[13]

The rite of monastic tonsure is much more developed than that of investiture. It takes place in the church, during the Eucharistic liturgy, after the communion of the faithful. The rite begins with a long penitential celebration consisting of prayers and hymns that refer to the conversion the candidate has undergone. Next there are several prayers by the superior and the imposition of hands. Then the superior sprinkles ashes on the head of the professed to indicate renunciation of the world and birth to a new life. This is followed by tonsure (in the form of a cross on five different places on the head) and the clothing of the professed. Then the abbot lays his hands on the professed using an ancient prayer formula attributed to Abraham of Nathpar (6th cent.). The rite continues with a thanksgiving by the superior, an admonitory instruction, the reception of communion by the superior and the professed, and a final exhortation.

6. COPTIC RITE OF MONASTIC PROFESSION[14]

The Coptic rite of monastic profession consists of two parts: the investiture of the monk and, after several years of training in the

[11] J. M. Vosté, *Pontificale iuxta Ritum Ecclesiae Syrum Orientalium, id est Chaldeorum,* Part 4 (Rome, 1938) 303–387; idem, "Projet d'édition du Pontifical des Syriens orientaux," *EphLit* 53 (1939) 3–12; Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 127–141.

[12] See Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 127–130.

[13] Ibid., 131–141.

[14] R. Toukhi, *Livre contenant les saintes prières pour les ordinations de ceux qui sont élus pour recevoir les ordres propres au clergé et aux prêtres, pour la bénédiction des vêtements des moins,* vol. 1 (Rome, 1761); H. Malek, "Les livres liturgiques de l'Eglise copte," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant,* vol. 3, *Orient Chrétien* (Rome, 1964) 1–35; O.H.E. Burmester, "Rites and Ceremonies of the Coptic Church," *Eastern Churches*

monastery, the giving of the *schema,* which corresponds to the Byzantine great habit.

a) Coptic rite of investiture[15]

The rite of investiture usually takes place after the monk has spent three years in the monastery. The ritual has two parts: a liturgy of preparation and the rites of tonsure and investiture of the candidate. The first part is a long Liturgy of the Word, which begins with the diaconal litany, the offering of incense, the great doxology, the reading of Ephesians 6:10-16 (a text also used in the other Oriental liturgies of profession), the τρισάγιον, the gospel reading, which is from John 3:1-21 and stresses the link between baptism and monastic profession, several prayers, and the Creed. The second part contains the rites of tonsure, the various prayers over the different pieces of the monastic habit (taken especially from Ephesians 6), the investiture (tunic, belt, and skullcap), the Our Father, and concluding prayers.

b) Coptic rite of giving the schema[16]

The *schema* is a kind of leather scapular worn by Coptic monks which, in the Byzantine Rite, symbolizes the cross of Christ. The ritual follows the plan for tonsure, the differences being in the readings for the liturgy of preparation, which in this case are Hebrews 13:7-25 and Luke 12:32-44. In the second part there is the blessing of the *schema* and of the monk who is to receive it, the anointing of the latter, and various prayers of thanksgiving. The rite concludes with the giving of a cross and an admonition by the superior.

Quarterly 5 (1954) 217–229; B.T.A. Evvets, "Le rite copte de la prise d'habit et de la profession monacale," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* (1906) 60–73, 130–148.

[15] See Raffin, *Les rituels orientaux,* 143–149.

[16] Ibid., 150–168.

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16

The Rite of Religious Profession in the West

According to present Church law, "By religious profession members assume by public vow the observance of the three evangelical counsels, are consecrated to God through the ministry of the Church, and are incorporated into the institute with rights and duties defined by law" (*CIC,* can. 654). This concept of religious profession is the end result of a complicated and many-faceted historical process. Religious life is not a univocal or uniform reality but one that is marked by a variety of charisms. The Latin term itself *(professio)* does not acquire a fully technical or juridical meaning until the seventh and eighth centuries.

In the following section we will describe the most important stages in the history of the rites of religious profession, limiting ourselves to the West. Then we will take a look at the present *Ordo professionis religiosae (OPR)* published in 1970 according to the directives of Vatican II.

I. THE HISTORICAL MODELS OF THE RITE OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

There are three basic stages to this history, corresponding more or less to the three major historical forms of religious life: monasticism, the mendicant orders, and modern congregations.

1. *Monastic Profession*

Looking at the chief Latin sources for Western monasticism, which date from the fourth to the seventh century, we see that, for the first cenobites, entrance into the monastic life involves simply a change of clothing. The candidate to Pachomius's monastery receives a few days' instruction and his fitness is ascertained. He is divested of his secular clothing and clothed in the monastic habit; then, at the time for

prayer, he is led before all the brothers.[1] John Cassian, who describes how aspirants to monastic life were received into the monasteries of the Thebiad, says that the change of clothing takes place in the midst of the assembly of the brothers and precedes the period of probation, which lasts a year and is required of the candidate before he is introduced into a deanery.[2] Later, with the Rules of Caesarius, the change of clothing no longer precedes the period of probation but takes place at the end.[3]

Along with the change of clothing which is a sign of the monastic commitment, there gradually arose the concept of a *promissio:* at first, a promise to observe the Rule, then later a promise to obey the commands of the abbot.[4] With the Master this promise becomes more solemn. Monastic legislators are also concerned that the candidate to monastic life be divested of his goods, which he offers to God as a *donatio* in favor of the monastery.[5] With St. Benedict, this donation is worded in the form of a *petitio* and is made, together with the promise and change of clothing, at the end of the period of formation.[6] With the Master and St. Benedict, entrance in the monastery is ritualized. Benedict borrows the Master's norms, shortening and summarizing them. He also unites the ceremonies scattered throughout the *Regula Magistri,* which divided the rite of profession into several parts: at the beginning, two months after entry, and at the end of the year of probation. What follows is a description of the rite created by Benedict in chapter 58 of his Rule.

If the novice shows a firm resolve to live in the monastery, after a period of twelve months, during which he is instructed in the Rule, he is admitted to the community with the following ceremony. In the

[1] Pachomius, *Praecepta,* 49: L. Cremaschi, ed., *Pacomio e i suoi discepoli: Regole e scritti* (Magnano, 1988) 73.

[2] John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum,* IV, 1–7: ed. J. C. Guy, SCh 109 (1965) 122–131.

[3] Caesarius, *Regula virginum,* 4: ed. A. de Vogüé and J. Courreau, SCh 345 (1988) 182–183.

[4] *Regula Macharii,* 23: ed. S. Pricoco, "Scrittori greci e latini" (Mondadori, 1995) 52–53; Caesarius, *Regula virginum,* 58: ed. A. de Vogüé and J. Courreau, SCh 345 (1988) 242–243.

[5] *Regula Magistri,* 89: ed. A. de Vogüé, SCh 106 (1964) 370–379.

[6] Benedict, *Regula monachorum,* 58: ed. S. Pricoco, "Scrittori greci e latini" (Milan, 1995) 240–245.

oratory, in the presence of all, the novice promises stability *(stabilitas),* conversion of life *(conversatio morum),* and obedience *(oboedientia)*. This promise is drawn up in the form of a petition by the novice himself, who signs it and places it on the altar. Then he intones the verse: *Suscipe me, Domine, secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et ne confundas me ab exspectatione mea* (Ps 118:116). The whole community repeats this verse three times, concluding with the *Gloria Patri*. Next the novice prostrates himself at the feet of each brother, asking him to pray for him. Then he is divested of his secular clothes, which he is still wearing, and clothed in the habit of the monastery. The Rule of Benedict does not mention the Eucharist here, but considering what is said in chapter 59 on how boys are to be offered to God in the monastery, it is logical to imagine that monastic profession also took place at the offertory of the Mass. Benedictine tradition has always followed this interpretation.

Because it takes place near the altar and the Eucharist, Benedictine profession has been called *professio super altare*. It expresses the consecratory aspect of monastic life, which is seen as an offering sanctified by the altar and flowing from it, so to speak. At the same time it expresses the relationship between the monastic life itself and the Eucharistic act. Benedictine profession, centered as it is on the individual's act of offering, may be related to the Oriental tradition, which, as we see in Pseudo-Dionysius,[7] stresses the importance of the consecratory prayer (epiclesis) by the priest over the candidate. In fact, in the ancient Latin monastic sources, profession is called *ordinatio, benedictio,* or even *consecratio*.[8] Such terms are probably meant to express the idea that monastic profession is more a mystery than an act of the will.

Some scholars think that the primitive ritual of Benedictine profession was in some way inspired by the *stipulatio* of Roman law. *Stipulatio* was an oral contract and had a number of applications. In public law it was used, for example, to conclude peace treaties and alliances; in family law it was used to promise a daughter in marriage. When the *stipulatio* was completed, after it had been written out with all its clauses, it was read by the future stipulator to the future promiser and ended with the question: *Ea quae supra scripta sunt, promittis?,* to which

[7] Pseudo-Dionysius, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia,* 6: PG 3:533A–C.

[8] R. Molitor, "Von der Mönchsweihe in der lateinischen Kirche," *Theologie und Glaube* 16 (1924) 586–588.

the promiser replied: *Promitto*. The Benedictine promise is supposed to have assumed the interrogative form of the *stipulatio*.[9]

The Benedictine norms and accompanying ceremonies remained substantially unchanged in later Rules and in Western monastic practice until modern times. But there were several important developments, which we present in summary form.

The liturgical tradition related to monastic profession developed during the Middle Ages. Its starting point was the oldest texts, those of the *GeV,* where we find a prayer for the admission of nuns: *Oratio in domo ancillarum Dei* (no. 1573), and another for the admission of monks: *Oratio pro renuntiantibus saeculo* (no. 1574). The latter prayer passes into the eighth-century Gelasian. Later developments in the rite of profession refer to three major sources: the Benedictine Rule, the Rule of the Master (from which are sometimes taken ritual elements neglected by Benedict), and the *Poenitentiale* of Theodore of Canterbury († ca. 690), who reorganized monastic life. The *Poenitentiale* explicitly situates monastic profession within the celebration of the Eucharist. It provides three prayers to be said over the professed and contains elements that tend to make monastic profession similar to baptism.[10]

From the tenth century on, witnesses are more numerous. Various pontificals have preserved either the euchology of the rite or a brief description of the ritual and its prayers. The *PRG* contains two *ordines* for monastic profession. The second, entitled *Ordinatio monachi* (no. XXIX), simply reproduces the text of Theodore of Canterbury's *Poenitentiale*. The first rite, entitled *Ordo ad faciendum monachum* (no. XXVIII), seems to have been inspired by elements of investiture with the monastic habit, which is the essential rite here. *PR* XII also has two *ordines* for monastic profession. The *Ordo ad faciendum monachum* (placed by M. Andrieu in Appendix VII) is of special interest, since it reproduces a late twelfth-century *ordo* from Monte Cassino. After an admonition that stresses the baptismal meaning of monastic profession, the novice is invited to renounce the world, his family, and his own will. This renunciation takes the form of a baptismal scrutiny. The rite continues

[9] The first to express this opinion was I. Herwegen, "Geschichte der Benediktinischen Professformel," in *Studien zur Benediktinischen Profess,* Beitrage zur Geschichte des Alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens 3 (Münster, 1912) 38–39.

[10] Theodore, *Poenitentiale,* 3: PL 99:928. Monastic profession was regarded as a second baptism.

with the reading of the *petitio,* which is then placed on the altar, the traditional verse *Suscipe,* the blessing of the habit, investiture, etc. At the end of the thirteenth century, in the rite of monastic profession according to the Cistercian tradition, we find introduced the singing of the *Veni Creator*.[11] The *PGD* essentially repeats the twelfth-century texts, which then pass into the post-Tridentine pontificals. These, however, do not contain a rite of monastic profession properly so-called. In them we find, in connection with the rite for the blessing of an abbot, the ceremonies to be performed in the totally anachronistic case where the abbot himself, just before his blessing, must make monastic profession.

In conclusion, we may note that monastic tradition associates profession with the altar and the Eucharist. That is why it is called *professio super altare*. A twelfth-century *ordo* from the abbey of Einsiedeln contains a new and strange rubric: "Then the abbot takes his [the monk's] head and places it on the altar."[12] This unusual gesture is meant to show that profession is the offering of oneself in the one sacrifice of Christ and the Church. All the actions of the baptized are directed toward this sacrifice and receive their value from it.

In the history of the rite of monastic profession certain elements have emerged suggesting the idea of a link between profession and baptism. Some parts of the rite of profession seem to be modeled directly on the baptismal rites. In Benedict's Rule investiture in the monastic habit signifies simply the loss of the right of ownership.[13] But after the seventh century it comes to signify a baptismal garment, as we see, for example, in the aforementioned *Poenitentiale* of Theodore of Canterbury.

2. *Profession in the Mendicant Orders*

At the beginning of the second millennium there appears, along with the form of monastic profession just described, another type of

[11] B. Thivierge, *Le rituel cistercien de profession monastique: Une commentaire historique, théologique et liturgique du rituel cistercien de profession monastique et des formulaires de bénédiction du moine et de la coule* (Rome, 1992) 63–64.

[12] *Ordo Einsieldensis,* Mss. Bibliothek, cod. 112. Cited by M. Martelli, "La professione dei voti religiosi nei formulari liturgici," excerpted from *La spiritualità della Religiosa* (Padua, 1966) 88.

[13] M. Augé, *L'abito religioso: Studio storico e psico-sociologico dell'abbigliamento religioso* (Rome, 1977) 62–63.

profession, clerical in nature. Later it would become characteristic of the mendicants, who adopted it in the latter half of the twelfth century. But the rite derives from practices we see first in the canonical movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There it is a ceremony of incorporation or admission to the novitiate. The structure of the rite, as described in the *Consuetudines* of the Canons Regular of St. Victor of Paris in the twelfth century,[14] is as follows:

1. *Adductio in capitulum*
2. *Prostratio cum petitione.*
3. *Erectio ad iussum abbatis.*
4. *Interrogatio cum promissione.*
5. *Immixtio manuum.*
6. *Promissio oboedientiae.*
7. *Oratio pro perseverantia.*
8. *Concessio societatis.*
9. *Osculum.*
10. *[Vestitio].*

A characteristic gesture of this rite is the *immixtio manuum,* which in the tenth and eleventh centuries was the most important symbolic gesture of the feudal contract. When the *iunior,* or vassal, entered into the service of the *senior,* or lord of the region, entrusting himself to the latter's protection *(commendatio),* he would kneel, place his hands in those of the lord *(immixtio manuum),* and promise him fealty. The *senior,* as a sign of acceptance, would give the vassal the kiss of peace *(osculum)*. Thus the *iunior* became the vassal *(homo ligius)* of the lord of the region, whose obligation remained that of the vassal's *defensio* or *tuitio*. It is easy to see that the essential elements of the feudal *commendatio* are present in the rite of incorporation described above.

We should note that the institutes of canons, even though they introduced elements of the feudal contract into the ceremony of admission to the novitiate, kept the rite of profession as found in the monastic tradition. Thus theirs was a *professio super altare*. In time, however, *professio (promissio) in manibus* came to be joined to *professio super altare,* either as a rite that took place earlier in the chapter room or else during Mass. *Professio in manibus* was adopted by the new

[14] *Antiquae consuetudines Canonicorum Regularium S. Victoris Parisiensis,* chap. 27: E. Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus* (Rouen, 1702; Antwerp, 1737) 3:742–743.

orders that arose between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, especially by the mendicants.

One type of *professio in manibus* is that of the Order of Preachers. It seems that at first the Dominicans, founded in Toulouse in 1215, had a canonical structure and thus also *professio super altare*. But once they became fully aware of their universal apostolic mission, they soon abandoned the canonical structure, adopting *professio in manibus* at the general chapter of 1220. In fact, monastic *stabilitas* or *donatio* to a church of professed canons no longer adequately expressed the lifestyle of the Dominicans, who had to move frequently and undertake journeys for the sake of the apostolate. For that reason they came to understand the rite of profession as a promise of obedience, a personal commitment to the chapter, to the master general, or to his representative. This is the tenor of the profession formula we find already in the first Constitutions:

Ego *N.* facio professionem et promitto obedientiam Deo et beatae Mariae et tibi *N.,* magistro Ordinis Praedicatorum, et successoribus tuis, secundum regulam beati Augustini et institutiones fratrum ordinis Praedicatorum, quod ero obediens tibi tuisque successoribus usque ad mortem.[15]

Obviously the rite must have been adapted to the new formula of profession. Thus the *immixtio manuum,* which in the canonical tradition was the characteristic gesture of the *promissio* in the ceremony of entrance into the novitiate, now becomes the characteristic gesture of religious profession.

The rite of profession of the Friars Minor also has the characteristics of *professio in manibus*. The profession formula of the Constitutions of Narbonne of 1260 is expressed in these terms:

Ego frater *N.,* voveo et promitto Deo et B. Mariae Virgini et B. Francisco et omnibus sanctis et tibi, Pater, toto tempore vitae meae, servare Regulam Fratrum Minorum per dominum Honorium Papam confirmatam, vivendo in obedientia, sine proprio et in castitate.[16]

[15] The text is given by A. H. Thomas, "La profession religieuse des dominicains: Formule, cérémonies, histoire," *Archiv Fratrum Praedicatorum* 339 (1969) 21.

[16] M. Bihl, ed., "Constitutiones generales Ordinis Fratrum Minorum editae et confirmatae in Capitulo generali apud Narbonam a.D. 1260, decima iunii, tempore rev. P. Fr. Bonaventura," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 34 (1941) 40.

We notice that this formula of profession speaks for the first time of a vow *(voveo et promitto Deo)*. What we have, no doubt, is the concept of a public religious vow that sounds very scholastic. The Franciscan formula also explicitly mentions the so-called evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty, and chastity. This triad, which corresponds to the Benedictine triad of stability, conversion of life, and obedience, appears for the first time in the middle of the twelfth century at the abbey of St. Genevieve in Paris.[17] During the thirteenth century most religious orders would follow the example of the Franciscans, even those that had been founded earlier. Thus the three vows will later constitute the essential element of religious profession.

The rite of *professio in manibus* clearly expresses the nature of profession as a contract between the religious and the community that receives him. The characteristic gesture of *immixtio manuum* illustrates well the two aspects of profession: offering the hand and taking the hand, in other words, promise and *societas*. *Professio super altare,* on the other hand, contains only the candidate's promise to the community. In the Benedictine tradition, the monastic community offers no *restipulatio* in exchange for the novice's *stipulatio*. The only thing it offers, at his request, is a house where he may satisfy his own desire to follow Christ more closely.

3. *Profession in Modern Congregations*

Many modern congregations, especially women's, have accepted the rite of the Society of Jesus, which takes place during the Eucharistic celebration,[18] before the reception of communion, while the priest is holding up the consecrated host. The candidate reads aloud the prescribed formula and then receives communion. The ceremony is public, and the vows are pronounced in the presence of the person of the superior who accepts them. This is a so-called *professio super hostiam*.

Nadal says that, given the rite's simplicity, the first General Congregation of the Society considered adding other ceremonies to the profession. But it was decided that *constitutiones esse servandas, nec*

[17] Odo, *Epist*. 1: PL 196:1399.

[18] Although the text of the Ignatian *Constitutiones* says "ubiendo celebrado en la yglesia públicamente," from the beginning these words have been interpreted to mean "after the [priest celebrant's] communion." (See J. Nadal, *Scholia in Constitutiones S.I.*, ed. M. Ruiz Jurado, Biblioteca Teológica Granadina 17 [Granada, 1976] 140.)

ceremonias addendas. Still we know that the Jesuit candidate, after reading the formula of profession, would give the written paper to the superior, who would place it on the altar. *Quae consuetudo,* adds Nadal, *videtur necessario introducta, ut repraesentetur vota in manus recipi*.[19]

Suárez has shown the theological meaning of this rite, stressing that profession is made "into the hands of Christ himself, rather than into those of the prelate." By profession the Jesuit offers himself to Christ in the person of his vicar, to be sent wherever the greater glory of God requires. By giving Eucharistic communion to the professed, the celebrant indicates that he is receiving him in communion of spirit, accepting his profession. Jesus Christ, by giving himself, "pledges to help the professed remain faithful to the word he has given and grants him the pledge of a special reward, which he will receive one day, provided he does not break his promise." Suárez also says that since the Eucharist is the "consummation and perfection of all that is sacred," communion should be seen as the "completion of profession."[20]

The origin of *professio super hostiam* is probably rooted in very ancient practices. Already in the third century the schismatic Novatian, before giving communion to his followers, demanded from them an oath of fidelity.[21] In the high Middle Ages, similar manifestations were required of those who were expected to receive communion at the Mass preceding their trial by ordeal. Two centuries before Ignatius, we find in the general chapter of the Friars Minor, held in Perpignan in 1331, a provision stating that vows were to be pronounced immediately before the reception of communion. But this practice was revoked at the next general chapter, held in Assisi in 1336.[22] Ignatius's immediate inspiration was probably the oath used in certain military orders, a practice deeply rooted in Spanish tradition. The vows taken by Ignatius and his other six companions on August 15, 1534, in the chapel of St. Denis de Montmartre, were private vows to observe poverty and chastity and to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Even then, these vows were pronounced before the communion of the Mass celebrated by Faber, the only priest in the group.

[19] Ibid.

[20] F. Suárez, *De Religione Societatis Jesu,* book 6, chap. 5, 9–12, *Opera omnia,* t. 16: ed. C. Berton (Paris, 1860) 868–870.

[21] Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica,* VI, 43, 18: ed. G. Bardy, SCh 41 (1955) 158.

[22] Texts in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 2 (1909) 281.

As we said above, *professio super hostiam* was later adopted by most modern congregations, especially women's. Several times during the nineteenth century the Sacred Congregation of Rites forbade the taking of vows before the host prior to the reception of communion. It based itself on an earlier response by the same Congregation (January 16, 1677), which forbade the interruption of Mass in order to say prayers in time of public calamities. But thanks to the influence of a Jesuit consultor, a decree of the same Congregation, issued August 14, 1894, and approved by Pope Leo XIII, reconfirmed the lawfulness of such a custom. The decree refers explictly to the practice of the Society of Jesus approved by Pope Gregory XIII.[23]

Obviously each of the three types of profession analyzed thus far represents a clearly defined cultural and spiritual milieu. However, in the history of the rite of profession, there is a move toward an increasingly voluntaristic and juridic concept of profession, in contrast to the concept of Eastern tradition, which sees profession as an exquisite mystery. *Professio super hostiam,* the expression of a highly individualistic piety, represents the end point in this process.

II. THE *ORDO PROFESSIONIS RELIGIOSAE* OF 1970

The *OPR* is the result of the decisions of the Second Vatican Council, which called for the creation of a rite of religious profession and renewal of vows (*SC* 80) that would foster greater sobriety and dignity and reestablish a basic unity in this area, while leaving the way open for legitimate differences. "Except where there is a particular law to the contrary, this rite should be adopted by those who make their profession or renewal of vows during Mass." In any case, it is hoped that religious profession will be made during the celebration of Mass. We should note that the proliferation of religious institutes and the lack of a liturgical order for the whole Church had caused a slow deterioration in the rite of profession, especially in rituals composed in the twentieth century. The simplicity of earlier times was gradually lost, with an increasing introduction of ascetical subjectivism and a spirit of legalism. Rites of profession became longer, sometimes including ceremonies that added sentimental elements to their basic meaning but nothing substantial in terms of enrichment.

[23] For details see L. Ravasi, "La professione 'super hostiam,'" *Vita Religiosa* 4 (1968) 615–619.

With the *OPR,* the rite of profession is no longer simply the particular custom of an individual religious institute. It is now a rite officially accepted into the Latin Church's liturgical books, forming part of the Roman Ritual.

1. *Structure of the Rite*

Our reference point is the rite of perpetual profession, theologically the most distinctive and ritually the most complete.

The rite takes place during Mass after the proclamation of the gospel. Thus the order of the celebration of Mass is not disturbed; its two parts are clearly respected and separated. The homily ideally serves as link between the Liturgy of the Word and the rite of profession, of which the homily itself is a part, as an address to those about to be professed. Religious institutes which, by virtue of particular law, have the custom of celebrating the rite of profession at another point during the Mass may keep this custom. But "since the rite of profession before the Blessed Sacrament, prior to receiving communion, is not in harmony with good liturgical sense, new religious families may not adopt it. Institutes in which, by particular law, such a rite is already in use, are urged to discontinue it" (*OPR, Praenotanda*, no. 15).[24]

The rite of profession properly so-called contains the following structural elements (see the schema in the *OPR, Praenotanda,* no. 6):

a) The call of the candidates or their request, which may, however, be omitted according to circumstances.

b) The homily to the people and the candidates on the beauty and dignity of religious life.

[24] Recently N. Hausman, "Pour la 'Professio super Hostiam': Une étude du 'Rituel de la profession religieuse,'" *NRT* 110 (1988) 729–742," has joined the defenders of the Jesuit tradition on this point. They say that by preferring the monastic tradition of profession *post evangelium*, the *OPR* is in danger of reducing all religious vows to the pattern of neo-baptismal *conversio morum,* forgetting the Eucharistic and missionary dynamism of profession *super hostiam*. We believe, on the other hand, that the *OPR* has a fuller Eucharistic dynamism of its own, since it is not limited to a medieval concept of the Eucharist concerned primarily with "presence" (a concept to which *professio super hostiam* is heir), but contemplates this mystery in its realization as the sacramental presence of the sacrifice of Christ. As for missionary-apostolic dynamism, it must be admitted that the *OPR* is limited in this regard, but these limitations can be overcome by intelligent adaptation of the texts of the typical rite according to the spirit of the various apostolic institutes.

c) The interrogation of the candidates by the celebrant or superior, who asks them if they are prepared to consecrate themselves to God and commit themselves to seeking perfect charity, according to the rule and constitutions of their religious family. The suggested questions touch on the following themes: the intimate relationship between baptismal consecration and religious consecration; the commitment to follow Christ in a life of perfect chastity, obedience, and poverty; the intention to attain perfect charity; commitment to the apostolate (an alternative question is provided for candidates in contemplative institutes).

d) The litany, which is at the same time a prayer to God the Father and a request for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints. This replaces the General Intercessions of the Mass.

e) The profession, made before the Church, to the lawful superior of the institute, the witnesses, and the faithful. Each religious family may use whatever formula it deems most suitable. The *OPR* offers a sample in the Appendix. This formula, which each candidate has written out by hand ahead of time, is read by the candidate publicly. Then the newly professed goes to the altar and places on it the paper with the formula. This is followed by the singing of the antiphon *Suscipe me, Domine . . .* (Ps 118:116), which we have already met in the Rule of Benedict and in the entire Western tradition.

f) The solemn blessing and consecration of the professed. This long and beautiful formula (two options are provided) is rich in content and has the classical structure of a solemn prayer of blessing. With this blessing the Church ratifies the profession of the religious and asks the heavenly Father to pour out the gifts of the Spirit on all the newly professed. The introduction of this epicletic prayer is an important new addition in the Western tradition, which too often had forgotten the aspect of religious profession as a mystery.

g) Depending on the custom of the religious family, the symbols of profession are given. These are expressions of perpetual dedication to God. No special symbol is suggested for men, but for women the ring is mentioned as a sign of the perpetual bond of the bride of Christ (see *OPR, Pars altera,* nos. 73–75).

The rite concludes with suitable words by the celebrant (or superior) or with the traditional kiss of peace among the newly professed and

the other brothers or sisters of the community. This is followed immediately by the offertory of the Mass. Some of the newly professed bring to the altar the bread, wine, and water for the Eucharistic sacrifice. There are also suggested formulas for remembering the newly professed in the body of the Eucharistic Prayer. At the end of Mass a special formula of blessing may be used.

2. *Theological Content of the Rite*

The biblical and euchological texts of the *OPR* express a theology of religious life that repeats to a great extent the themes of the Vatican II constitution *Lumen gentium*. Religious life is seen in the general framework of God's saving plan for humankind, accomplished in all of salvation history, culminating in the mystery of Christ and present in the Church. Especially highlighted is the ecclesial dimension of religious life, carefully expressed in the second formula of blessing or consecration of the newly professed:

Filiis autem tuis, quos sacris initiatos mysteriis, in sanctam congregasti Ecclesiam, varia charismatum dona distribuis, ut sint qui in casto connubio tibi deserviant quique nuptiis propter regnum caelorum renuntient, ac tanta invicem diligant caritate, ut, cor unum effecti, societatis aeternae praestent imaginem (*OPR, Pars prior,* no. 143).

Religious are baptized Christians who have been given a gift or special charism by the Spirit for the sake of the ecclesial community. When the candidates approach the altar and state their desire to consecrate themselves to God in a community, they are conscious that their profession is made before *(coram)* the Church *(OPR, Pars prior,* nos. 29, 85). This consecration is to the praise and service of Christ and his Church (*OPR, Pars prior,* nos. 8, 55, 57, 140; see the formula of profession in the Appendix). Religious life is a concrete and especially meaningful way of expressing in the Church the ideal of service to God, the total gift of oneself to the Lord (*OPR, Pars prior,* no. 73). As Vatican II recalls, consecration to God's service leads to service of the Church (see *Perfectae caritatis,* no. 5).

Religious life exists within the Church and for the service of the Church. This service has many aspects and dimensions. The euchology of the rite expresses a few of them. Religious are called by their life to build up the Church (*OPR, Pars prior,* nos. 67, 77); to make it more fruitful (*OPR, Pars prior,* nos. 62, 141); to be a new stimulus to its

holiness (*OPR, Pars prior,* no. 141; *Pars altera,* no. 72; opening prayer, formula I for Mass on the Day of Perpetual Profession); to share in its mission by faithfully carrying out the ministry assigned to them (*OPR, Pars prior,* no. 70). Religious participate fully in the life of the Church (*OPR, Pars altera,* no. 157), which they should love with steadfast *(strenua)* charity (*OPR, Pars altera,* no. 72). Seeing them, all people should be able to recognize Christ the Lord present in his Church (*OPR, Pars altera,* no. 159). Among the texts suggested by the *OPR* lectionary, Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35 are noteworthy for their rich ecclesial content.

The intimate relationship between religious life and the mystery of the Church is rooted in the sacrament of baptism. By religious consecration a believer resolves to live his or her baptismal consecration more deeply (*OPR, Pars prior,* nos. 27, 57, 141). Worthy of note among the baptismal texts found in the *OPR* lectionary is Romans 6:3-11.

Religious profession is an offering (*OPR, Pars prior,* n. 62) intimately "associated with the Eucharistic sacrifice" (words of the one who receives the profession: see *OPR,* Appendix). This idea is developed especially in the euchology of the Mass formulas for profession (*OPR,* Appendix). The sacrifice of self expressed by the religious in his or her profession can only be a Christian sacrifice, an inner and personal sharing in the sacrifice of Christ, eminently communicated and given to us in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This teaching is also reinforced by the selection of passages from the Gospel of John suggested by the *OPR:* John 12:24-26; 15:1-8; 15:9-17.

In conclusion, we can say that baptism and the Eucharist form the ontological basis for the ecclesial nature of religious life, just as for the Christian life in general.[25] Paradoxically, the specific character of religious life is not to be found in anything specific, anything that would distinguish it, contentwise, from the common Christian ideal. The *OPR* presents religious life as a life that is eminently ecclesial. Too often the spirituality of religious has stressed the individualistic and ascetical aspect of their consecration, as if it were something marginal to the Church's life. It is good that the *OPR* strongly insists on the ecclesial dimension. The *OPR* also stresses other dimensions of religious

[25] A. M. Triacca, "La vita di consacrazione nelle sue origini sacramentarie," in *Per una presenza viva dei Religiosi nella Chiesa e nel mondo* (Turin-Leumann, 1970) 283–348.

life. As a special Christian vocation, religious life is a gift of the Spirit; it is a following and imitation of Jesus Christ; it is a bright sign of the good things to come. In each case, these elements can be properly situated and appreciated only in an ecclesial framework.

Conclusion

The *OPR* deliberately draws its inspiration from the oldest rites of profession, as if to codify in the new rituals of religious families the earliest tradition of content and structure. At the same time it presents itself as a model ritual, to which each individual institute can and must give its own shape, so that the model itself may express the nature and spirit of the religious family (see *OPR, Praenotanda,* no. 14). The eclectic nature of the *OPR* allows each individual institute to select those elements it judges most in accord with its spirituality or to replace them with others that are similar. In any case, the structural and theological lines of the typical ritual should be respected.

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17

The Rite of Consecration of Virgins

The rite of consecration of virgins *(Ordo Consecrationis Virginum;* henceforth *OCV),* revised in 1970, is the liturgical action with which the Church celebrates an act of God who has called a Christian virgin to consecrate her virginity to Christ, and through the action of the Holy Spirit, to dedicate herself for ever in love to liturgical worship and service of the Church. The pre-Vatican II ritual considered the consecration of virgins as a specifically monastic celebration for nuns in solemn vows, restored in 1868 by Dom Guéranger for the Benedictine nuns of Solesmes.

Perhaps the most important consequence of the revision was the readmission of women living in the world to this rite. This liturgical action has an essential meaning for the whole Church and offers a theological locus for the theology of marriage, although it is still largely unknown. The synod of bishops on "Consecrated Life" in November 1994 took up *Lumen gentium* 42: the fundamental consecration is that of baptism. Any other type of consecration can be understood only on the basis of this and, by analogy, in relation to it.[1] The consecrated virgin is a baptized woman who, strengthened by the liturgical consecration received from the bishop, becomes "a surpassing sign of the Church's love for Christ . . . and an eschatological image of the world to come" (*OCV* 1). To understand the ideal of Christian virginity in the tradition of the Church, one must look to the liturgy of the *velatio virginum,* Masses for the Common of Virgins, and legends of virgin martyrs.

[1] Cf. *Perfectae caritatis,* 5: "expressing more perfectly the dedication already implicit in baptism."

1. *Historical Outline*

The Old Testament does not appear to value virginity. The accent is placed on the importance of fertility, and sterility is humiliation (Gen 30:23; 1 Sam 1:11; Luke 1:25), although virginity up to marriage is worthy of praise (Gen 24:16). The daughters of Jephthah lamented their virginity because they were to die before they were able to generate life (Judg 11:37). The prophetess Anna, however, did not remarry in order to consecrate herself to the Lord (Luke 2:37), and Judith remained a widow to be the mother of her people (Jdt 8:4; 16:22). Isaiah sees the marriage between a young man and a virgin as a symbol of the marriage between the Lord and Israel (Isa 62:5). There are a few signs that correlate marriage and virginity, or anticipate and prepare for Christian virginity: Jeremiah remained celibate at the order of Jahweh for his prophetic mission (Jer 16:1-4); the prophets Elijah and Elisha, according to rabbinic tradition, lived celibate lives.

In the New Testament it is Jesus who reveals the fundamental sense of virginity to those who have been given this gift for the kingdom of God (Matt 19:10-12; 1 Cor 7:7-8, 25-38): they participate in the virginity of the Church and are called brides of Christ. But the virgin Church as bride of Christ is paradoxically a sign and symbol of marriage (Eph 5:25). Paul, writing to the Corinthians, presents their Church as betrothed to Christ (2 Cor 11:2). Christ refers to this mystery of Church-bride when he presents his disciples as those who have already entered into the nuptial mystery of the kingdom (Matt 9:15). The parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13) is centered on the groom and the attitude essential for those who wish to participate in the joy of the kingdom. Mary, the only woman in the New Testament who is given explicitly the title of virgin (Luke 1:27), brings to light the significance of Christian virginity: a total gift (1 Cor 7:32, 35) anticipating the resurrection (Luke 20:34ff.).

Christian patristic literature shows that some Christian women, influenced by the writings of Paul, lived their *propositum virginitatis* while continuing to live in the world but without a liturgical celebration.[2] Ignatius of Antioch mentions a group of women, part of the Church at Smyrna, who practiced chastity: they are admitted to the group of widows.[3] Justin speaks of men and women who remained

[2] Ps.-Clement writes at the end of the second century: *Epistulae ad virgines,* in F. X. Funk, ed., *Patres Apostolici,* vol. 2 (Tübingen, 1901).

[3] Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyrnaeos*, 13, 1: P.-Th. Camelot, ed., SCh 10bis, 166.

virgins for the whole of their life.[4] It is difficult to say if the virgins occupied a special place in the community in the second century, although they are cited after deacons.[5] The *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus shows that they occupied a particular place in the Church of Rome.[6]

In the fourth century some began to establish groups living a common life, and the number of virgins increased, with theological reflection reaching a high point.[7] There was now mention of an *ordo virginum*,[8] dedicated to divine worship.[9] Virginity was valued after the "testimony of blood" of the martyrs. Agnes was the first virgin-martyr honored in Rome. The account of her martyrdom *(Passio)* is the source of several antiphons. The earliest explicit references to a celebration for the consecration of a virgin date from 352/353, when Pope Liberius consecrated Marcellina, sister of Ambrose, in Rome.[10] Pope Siricius specified that the *velatio* and the blessing should take place on Christmas, Epiphany, or Easter during Mass.[11] After the readings the bishop addressed the virgin on the meaning and obligation of consecration; she renewed publicly the *propositum* made privately; after the blessing[12] he put on her a veil like that of a married woman.[13] From this time we find the expressions *virgo sacra, sponsa Christi*.[14]

2. *Liturgical Development*

From the fifth century we find liturgical sources for the consecration of virgins. The Verona Sacramentary contains the first liturgical formularies in two places. The feast of St. Peter and St. Paul offers a *Hanc*

[4] Justin, *First Apology,* 15: E. J. Goodspeed, ed., *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen, 1984) 24–77.

[5] Polycarp of Smyrna, *Ad Philippenses,* 5, 3: P.-Th. Camelot, ed., SCh 10bis, 210.

[6] Hippolytus, *La Tradition Apostolique,* 12: B. Botte, ed., LQF 39 (Münster i. W, 1963) 33.

[7] Cf. R. Metz, *La consécration des vierges dans l'Eglise Romaine: Etude d'histoire de la liturgie* (Paris, 1954) 67–75.

[8] Cf. Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis:* A. Kroymann, ed., CCL 2, 1015–1035.

[9] Ps.-Clement, 1 *Epistula ad virgines*, 3, 1: F. X. Funk, ed., *Patres Apostolici,* 2:2.

[10] Ambrose, *De virginibus*, 3, 1–4: PL 16:231–233.

[11] Siricius, *Epistola X ad Gallos episcopos* I (= Damasus, *Decretale ad episcopos Galliae,* 3–4: PL 13:1182–1183.

[12] The oldest prayer of blessing is found in Ambrose, *De institutione virginis*, 104–114: PL 16:345–348.

[13] Cf. Metz, *La consécration*, 124–138.

[14] Ibid., 91–92.

igitur for the consecration Mass.[15] Secondly, it contains, among the Masses for September, under the title *Ad virgines sacras,* the collect *Respice, Domine, propitius* and a lengthy blessing, *Deus castorum corporum*.[16] This blessing persisted through the centuries on account of its rich but sober teaching.

The Gelasian Sacramentary, a Roman collection of prayers from the sixth century with numerous Gallican additions, repeats in section CIII, under the title *Consecratio sacrae virginis,* the prayers of the Verona Sacramentary, introducing at the end a reference to the wise and foolish virgins.[17] The Gelasian has three formularies for Mass on the day of consecration; the first and third have their own *Hanc igitur*.[18] The formulary in the *GeV,* probably of Frankish origin, blesses articles of clothing but not specifically the veil.[19]

The Gregorian Sacramentary, the papal liturgy of the seventh and eighth centuries, has prayers from the fifth and sixth centuries but contains new elements, under the title *Ad ancillas Dei velandas*.[20] Volume 3[21] describes the special features of various ninth-century *Ordines* with their organization and prayer formulas. While the *Ordo* of Paris (*GrH* 479) has the prayer *Deus castorum corporum,* Cambrai (*GrH* 480) has *Te invocamus, Domine*. The *Ordo* of Sainte Geneviève of Paris (*GrH* 481) is more complete: the virgin brings her garments to the altar to be blessed by the bishop; she then puts them on, returning to the altar, without the veil, and holding two lighted candles. This *Ordo* presents chants and readings of the Mass for the Common of Virgins. The blessing takes place after the gospel: the bishop gives the veil with the *GeV* formula. The virgin offers bread and wine, and holds two lighted candles for the duration of the Mass, after which she is given over to

[15] *Sacramentarium Veronense (Ve),* ed. L. C. Mohlberg, L. Eizenhöfer, and P. Siffrin (Rome^3, 1978) 283.

[16] *Ve* 1103 and 1104; this second prayer has been attributed to St. Leo the Great.

[17] *Sacramentarium Gelasianum(GeV),* ed. L. C. Mohlberg, L.Eizenhöfer, and P. Siffrin (Rome^3, 1981) 787, 788–790.

[18] *GeV* 793–796; 797–799; 800–803; Gallican origin; cf. A. Chavasse, *Le sacramentaire gélasien* (Tournai, 1958) 32–33.

[19] *Benedictio vestimentorum virginum, GeV* 791; *Oratio super ancillas Dei, GeV* 792.

[20] *Le sacramentaire grégorien: Ses principales formes d'après les plus anciens manuscrits,* vol. 1, ed. J. Deshusses (Fribourg, 1971) no. 995, p. 341; *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis,* ed. A. Dumas and J. Deshusses, CCL 159–159A (Turnhout, 1981) nos. 2604–2610, pp. 405–408.

[21] *Le sacramentaire grégorien,* vol. 3, ed. J. Deshusses (Fribourg, 1982) 478–483.

the abbess with an exhortation. Hosts are reserved for her for eight days. The *Ordo* from Modena (*GrH* 482) has the prayer of consecration *Deus castorum corporum,* the blessing of the garments, the giving of the veil, and a further blessing. In the *Ordo* of Padua (*GrH* 483), only the blessing of the garments of the virgins and widows is found, and there is no mention of ring or crown.

From the second half of the eighth century, the Roman sacramentaries entered the Franco-Germanic countries, with the intention of having a unifying book in these countries. A mixed liturgy developed in the Romano-Germanic Pontifical, compiled about 950. It transformed the Roman ritual into a dramatic celebration, developing the nuptial themes, duplicating antiphons and prayers. The insignia received an importance superior to that of the prayer of consecration.

The *PRG* offered two distinct, though similar celebrations: in a monastery[22] or in the world. It was usually celebrated on Epiphany, Eastertide, or on the feast of an apostle. In the case of a nun, she was presented to the bishop before the Mass. After the Gradual, she came forward to the altar, and the bishop blessed the garments with three prayers,[23] and then the veil. After putting on her garments, except for the veil, she returned carrying a lighted candle in each hand and prostrated before the altar. An antiphon, the litany, and the formula of blessing followed, taken from the *Ve*: *Respice, Domine,* and *Deus castorum corporum*. The bishop placed a veil on her, handed over to her a ring, and put a crown on her head, each action being accompanied by antiphons and prayers. At the end the bishop commended her to the faithful and threatened with canonical penalties anyone who tried to turn her from her commitments. The Mass formula had its own *Hanc igitur* (*PRG* XXI). Hosts were reserved for her for eight days.

In the case of a virgin living in the world, the celebration was simpler: no presentation to the bishop and no insignia.

From this point onward the rite remained substantially unchanged. The *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus* of Martène transcribed manuscripts

[22] *Le pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle (= PRG),* ed. C. Vogel and R. Elze, 3 vols., ST 226, 227, 269 (Vatican City, 1963–1972).

[23] *PRG* XX, 6 = *GeV* 791; *PRG* XX, 7 = *GeG* 2605; the beginning of *PRG* XX, 8 = *GrH* 1252.

dating from the late ninth to the fifteenth century.[24] The oldest, *Ordo* III (744), from the last quarter of the ninth century from Saint Gatien in Tours, gives a description and texts without the innovations in the *PRG*. This is also the case with *Ordo* XI (743), a tenth-century manuscript offering a series of prayers of benediction *ad libitum*. *Ordo* XIII (754), from the fourteenth century, deals with the consecration of Carthusian nuns.

The Roman Pontifical of the Twelfth Century[25] is virtually identical with *Ordo* V, from Apamea (746).[26] It foresees consecration possible on Sundays, feasts of the Lord and of Our Lady, the apostles, and the main feasts of martyrs. Thus the occasions when consecration may be celebrated have been increased.

The Pontifical of the Roman Curia of the Thirteenth Century reworked the *PRG* and renewed the repertoire of antiphons, such as *Veni, sponsa Christi*. The formulas accompanying the ring and crown, in which expressions such as *sponsa Dei* and *uxor Christi* occurred were substituted with more diffuse spousal images, taking up *PR* XII in its shorter form.[27]

The Pontifical of William Durandus, composed about 1295, was destined to become the official book of the Roman Church.[28] The *PRG* serving as its foundation, it introduced new elements, but with only one form for nuns. Its marriage allusions turned the consecration of virgins into a lavish spousal ceremony and reflected a juridical outlook and an attraction to dramatic celebrations. The woman was questioned about her age (she had to be at least twenty-five), her intentions, and her virginity. After the Gradual the virgins were escorted to the bishop, who addressed them. Then each virgin placed her hands in those of the bishop and promised to be faithful to the virginal *propositum*. A litany was sung, then the veil, ring and crown were

[24] E. Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus,* 2nd ed. (Antwerp, 1736–1738; reprint Hildesheim, 1967–1969) 2:517–552 transcribes thirteen *Ordines* for the consecration of virgins.

[25] *PR* XII, 154–164.

[26] Designated with the letter L in the edition of Andrieu. The longer version represents only one MS: Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus,* 534–537.

[27] *PR* XIII, 414–418.

[28] *Le pontifical romain au moyen-âge,* vol. 3: *Le pontifical de Guillaume Durand,* ed. M. Andrieu (Vatican City, 1940; reprint 1973) 411–425.

blessed.[29] The prayer of consecration and its preface were taken from the *Ve* but ended as in *GrS* (1254). The bishop pronounced the anathema against those who influenced virgins to fall short of their state. Hosts were reserved for them for three days.

The Roman Pontificals between 1485 and 1965 introduced only slight changes. Three additions are significant: the *Veni Creator,* the handing over of the Book of Hours, and the *Te Deum* to conclude the celebration. Hosts were no longer laid aside for them. Although further pontificals were published, they did not change the rite. Metz explains that no one changes an obsolete ceremony,[30] since consecrated virgins living in the world had disappeared.

3. *The Ritual of* 1970

The revision of the rite of the consecration of virgins (*SC* 80) intended it to be a sign of sanctification and service to the Church (*SC* 37–40). The aim was to preserve the solemnity of the celebration but to strip it of extravagance. Repetitions were to be avoided, and elements not adapted to our times were to be omitted, particularly those that degrade marriage. The ritual was scripturally enriched, and some euchological texts were restored to their original form, keeping its authentic meaning as the celebration of a marriage between Christ and the consecrated virgin.

The introduction to the *OCV* establishes the subject of consecration: virgins living in the world or nuns in solemn vows, lifting the restrictions that reserved this consecration to cloistered nuns.[31] It is innovative in that it allows consecration as long as there has been no marriage and the women who desire consecration have not publicly lived a disordered life. The minister for consecration of virgins is the local bishop, emphasizing the relationship between the virgin and the local Church. He establishes the conditions under which she is to undertake a life of perpetual virginity. There is no mention of the faculty of delegation to a priest, as the tradition and fullness of the sign require the presence of the bishop, who represents Christ. The

[29] *PGD* added further antiphons—*Ancilla Christi sum* (34) (*PCR* 2, 415), and: *Ecce quod concupivi iam video* (51), from the *Passio* of St. Agnes (PL 17, 819–820). The bishop for his part sang *Veni, electa mea* and *Veni, sponsa Christi*.

[30] Metz, *La consécration,* 341.

[31] *AAS* 43 (1951) 16.

Ordo suggests the day of consecration "during the octave of Easter, on solemnities, especially those that celebrate the incarnation, Sundays, or feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or of holy virgins." This reflects traditional practice and theological criteria. There is only one rubric concerning the place of the consecration: it is fitting for it to "take place in the cathedral," avoiding any form of personalized rite.

The structure of the two rituals of consecration is clear: invitation, homily, questioning, litany, renewal of the promise of chastity, prayer of consecration, and handing of insignia. The celebration takes place after the liturgy of the Word. In its theological content the ritual not only retains the riches of the past but adds to them, particularly by the use of Scripture. The celebration opens with the invitation to the candidate, who then lights her candle and processes up to the sanctuary, where the bishop invites her to take her place. This first part of the rite has been simplified: ritually, there is still a kind of cortege; theologically, the virgin approaches the altar and the bishop to encounter Christ, to celebrate with him in the liturgical context a rite of nuptial covenant.

The bishop's homily develops the theology of consecration, explaining the significance of the gift of virginity and its role in the sanctification of those called to virginity for the whole Church. The bishop questions the candidate about her resolve to persevere in virginity in the service of God and his Church, and to receive consecration. The virgin publicly renews her intention of virginity, offering to God, through the bishop, the *propositum* of choosing to serve God in a state of virginity. At this point a nun makes her religious profession.

The prayer of consecration, from *Ve,* has been restored to its original purity. It supplicates the Father to pour out upon the virgin the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. *Deus, castorum corporum* follows the tripartite model of consecratory prayers: anamnesis, epiclesis, intercession, although the epiclesis is fused with the intercessory part. The Christological part recalls the mystery of Christian virginity in an anamnesis. God is praised for his creation and redemption, allowing humankind to return to its original innocence, of which the consecrated virgin is a visible sign. It exalts the state of marriage, while proclaiming the excellence of the state of virginity. The second part is pneumatological, beginning with the characteristic *Implorantes* and proceeding with a long but not monotonous list of supplications. The *velatio* is regarded as a seal upon the vow of virginity. After the prayer

of consecration, insignia are presented: the veil and the ring (spousal signs) with a single formula that covers the giving of both; the Book of Hours (ecclesial sign) occurs at the end of the consecration of virgins. There is an intercession during the Eucharistic Prayer for the consecrated virgin, and she is solemnly blessed at the end of the Mass. The *Te Deum* is optional.

4. *Theological Content*

The doctrinal content of the *Ordo* is rich, influenced by tradition, both patristic and liturgical, and present-day theological reflection.[32] Virginity for the kingdom of God is a *mysterium,* a supernatural salvific reality, which cannot be explained by reason, but through faith. This gift of the Father is underlined in the *Ordo,* recalling the origin of virginity: "The life you seek to follow has its home in heaven. God himself is its source" (I, 16). God the Father is the origin of every authentic vocation: "you have called in love" (I, 21) those "to be more closely united to you" (I, 16), because "only you can kindle this flame of love" (I, 24).

The plan of the Father to unite the virgin with Christ as *sponsa Christi* is seen when the bishop asks: "Are you resolved to accept solemn consecration as a bride of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God?" (I, 17). When giving the ring, the bishop says: "Receive the ring that marks you as a bride of Christ" (I, 26). The virgin renounces the sexual element in marriage *(sacramentum)* but seeks to achieve what marriage signifies–union with Christ. Just as the Church is virgin, bride, mother, so the consecrated virgin is *virgo, sponsa, mater,* fruitful through her fidelity to the will of the Father (I, 16).

The homily considers that she becomes *virgo sacrata* and *sponsa Christi* through consecration by the Spirit: "The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete . . . anoints you with a new grace and consecrates you to God" (I, 16). This is echoed in the dismissal: "May the Holy Spirit . . . today consecrate your hearts" (I, 36). The *Ordo* underlines the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the virgin. The prayer of consecration invokes the Holy Spirit on the virgins, that they receive his particular gifts (I, 24).

The special relationship with the Church (virgin-bride-mother) is reflected in the life of a consecrated virgin, representing and making present this sign: "Our holy mother Church sees in you a chosen

[32] Cf. Calabuig and Barbieri, "Struttura e fonti dell' *Ordo consecrationis virginum,*" *EphLit* 96 (1982) 102–153; A. M. Triacca, "Significato teologico-liturgico della «Consacrazione cristiana» della Verginità," *EphLit* 96 (1982) 154–183.

company with the flock of Christ" (I, 16). The ability of the virgin to "signify" the virginal and nuptial mystery of the Church constitutes the most relevant aspect in which the relationship *ecclesia-virgo sacra* is articulated: "Not without reason have the holy fathers and doctors of the Church given to the consecrated virgins the same title, bride of Christ, which is that of the Church" (I, 16). This is defined above all in terms of service (I, 17).

The mystery of the Church and her protection of the consecrated virgin cannot be understood without reference to the example of Mary (see *SC* 103). Mary is the example for the Church and for the virgin. Patristic teaching is echoed by Vatican II: "In the mystery of the Church, both as mother and virgin, the virgin Mary is the forerunner, presenting in an eminent and singular way virginity and motherhood" (*LG* 63). The *Ordo* recalls the role of Mary in the incarnation of the Word, the spousal paradigm for all other supernatural nuptial structures (see I, 16).

The symbolic function of the consecrated virgin is expressed in relation to the kingdom of God. She is seen as an eschatological sign. The homily recalls that the virgin is: "a *sign* of the great mystery of salvation . . . fulfilled in the marriage covenant between Christ and his Church" (I, 16). The consecrated virgin is in a certain sense a sign of anticipation and experience of the future reality; the Father "has made our nature whole again, and made it possible for mortal people to reflect the life of angels" (I, 24). Although the whole Church awaits the Lord, the consecrated virgins express this most clearly: "Be wise: make ready your lamps. Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go out to meet him" (I, 13).

5. *Open Questions*

Although the liturgical problems have been considered, some theological, juridical, and pastoral problems remain open. The *Ordo* implicitly takes up the biblical-patristic tradition and the magisterial teachings, affirming the superiority of consecrated virginity over marriage. But this is a public praise of Christian virginity without resorting to rhetorical amplification or reducing the value of the conjugal state.

The charism of virginity for the kingdom does not belong exclusively to women; it is given both to men and women who devote themselves in total donation to the service of the Church. The absence

of a consecration for men is probably due to the fact that in apostolic tradition and the theology of Paul and John,[33] the virgin woman assumes the function of a sign of the Church in her specific condition as bride of Christ. But as the value of consecrated virginity does not only consist in the symbolic capacity of the spousal donation of the Church, it is possible to consider a rite of consecration for lay men who choose to embrace virginity for the kingdom.

A glance at the ritual raises the question why consecration is reserved to women living in the world, members of secular institutes, and nuns in solemn vows, but is not extended to other religious women. One solution would be to revoke the exclusion of nuns in simple vows and open consecration to those who wish to receive it. Or one could look at the difference between "consecration of virgins" and "monastic consecration," recognizing the fundamental destination for lay virgins and their immediate dedication to the service of the diocese and the bishop. Often women who live virginity for the kingdom of God are not aware of the possibility of receiving liturgical consecration. Catechesis is needed so that consecration of virgins does not remain an unpracticed rite.

[33] Cf. Eph 5:25-27; 2 Cor 10:17–11:2; Rev 21:2.

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B. Funerals

Elena Velkova Velkovska

18

Funeral Rites in the East

The funeral rites of the Christian East are little known and even less studied. While there are various articles and monographs on the subject, often they are no more than a superficial description of the funeral rites. Focusing on rubrical details, they contain only occasional references to problems of a more strictly theological or pastoral nature. Once again this situation is due to the lack of editions of primary liturgical sources such as collections of prayers and lectionaries. There is also no complete and reliable historical and liturgical study of Greek and Oriental patristic and post-patristic literature on the subject.

Our treatment of the subject, then, will suffer from these limitations, forcing us to restrict our study of liturgical data to the Byzantine tradition in the Greek language. Nevertheless, this brief study will use actual texts or microfilms of more than thirty unedited witnesses from the manuscript tradition of Italy and the Middle East. Thus we will be able to offer, as far as possible, a really new contribution to historical and liturgical reflection on Christian funeral rites in Byzantium.

1. *Early Period (Fourth to Fifth Century)*

The original setting for ecclesial prayer for the dead is to be found in the intercessions of the Eucharistic anaphora. Thus, for example, in the *Urtext* of the anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, immediately after the epiclesis for the transformation of the gifts and the resulting eschatological transformation of those who share in them, the deceased are mentioned in these terms: "Moreover we offer you this spiritual worship for those who rest in the faith: the fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelizers, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and for

every just spirit made perfect in the faith."[1] The text does not distinguish between the various categories of saints we would call "canonized" and all the spirits of the just (see Heb 12:23).[2] But that does not mean that funerals were not celebrated. The *Apostolic Constitutions,* a source from the same time as the text from Chrysostom text (ca. 380) and also Antiochene in origin, offers a much broader picture of the celebration. It includes the singing of psalms and the celebration of the Eucharist at the cemetery (VI, 30 and VIII, 41),[3] as well as commemorations for the third, ninth, and fortieth day after death (VII, 2), a practice that has been kept in the East until the present.[4] Again in the second half of the fourth century, but in Egypt, the *Euchologion* of Serapion of Thmuis contains the first prayers for the dead with the classic request that they might rest "in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."[5]

2. *The Euchological Repertory (Eighth to Twelfth Century)*

Aside from funerary steles, the oldest witness to Byzantine funeral texts is the collection of prayers in the Italo-Byzantine euchologion *Barberini gr.* 336 (8th cent.). It contains seven prayers: three are for "a deceased person" (τελευτήσας) in general; one is a "prayer at the bowing of the head" (κεφαλοκλισίας); two are for "the burial" (ἐπιτάφιος) of laity and bishops; one for a monk and, at the end of the codex, a diaconal litany for the dead (εἰς κοιμηθέντας).[6]

The first prayer in the collection, "God of all spirits and of all flesh . . .," also used in the Armenian and Coptic traditions,[7] can claim a

[1] *BAR,* 36, 1-3.

[2] R. F. Taft, "Praying to or for the Saints? A Note on the Sanctoral Intercessions/Commemorations in the Anaphora," in M. Schneider and W. Bersching, eds., *Ab Oriente et Occidente (Mt. 8:11): Kirche aus Ost und West. Gedenkschrift für Wilhelm Myssen* (St. Ottilien, 1996) 439–455.

[3] Ed. M. Metzger, *Les Constitutions Apostoliques,* vol. 3: Books VII and VIII, SCh 336 (Paris, 1987) 257–258; see also n. 278 of the introduction.

[4] For the history of this practice see G. Dagron, "Troisième, neuvième et quarantième jours dans la tradition byzantine: temps chrétien et anthropologie," *Les temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Age–IIIe–XIIIe s*., Colloques internationaux du CNRS 604 (Paris, 1984) 419–430.

[5] M. E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thinuis: A Literary, Liturgical and Theological Analysis,* OCA 249 (Rome, 1995) 68–69.

[6] *BAR,* nos. 264–270, 287.

[7] V. Bruni, *I funerali di un sacerdote nel rito bizantino secondo gli eucologi manoscritti di lingua greca,* Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Minor 14 (Jerusalem, 1972) 158.

certain antiquity, since it is attested in the famous Nessana papyrus (ca. 600)[8] and by a great number of epigraphs, beginning from the end of the seventh century.[9]

A certain number of euchologia, either Italo-Greek or Middle Eastern and dating from between the tenth and eleventh/twelfth century, contain euchological repertories similar to those of the *Barberini*, with prayers for other categories of deceased. But we should not be surprised at the titles of the various prayers, since they are often interchangeable.[10] The themes of the prayers are also more or less fixed and very archaic, along the lines of the famous Western *Requiem aeternam* (if we may be allowed the comparison). They center on the ideas of light, peace, rest, refreshment, and especially the "bosom of Abraham," a New Testament expression (see Luke 16:22-23 and Heb 4:10-11).[11] At any rate, the prayers are not meant to offer a complete doctrine of the hereafter, just as the anaphora does not offer a treatise on the consecration and transformation of the Eucharistic gifts.

3. The Oldest Rite (Tenth Century)

Thus far the Italo-Byzantine euchologion *Γ.β. X* of the Library of Grottaferrata, which dates from the tenth/eleventh century, may be considered the oldest funeral ritual in the Byzantine tradition (ff. 77r–83r).[12] Although the document is still unedited, its exceptional importance requires that its "celebration for those who have fallen asleep (κοιμηθέντας)" be described here, at least in summary fashion. In fact, the major parts of this rite will be found in various later combinations of celebration rites.

First of all, it is a single rite, meant for both laity and monks. The rite takes place in church. After the celebrant's opening blessing, the

[8] J.C.J. Kraemer, *Excavations at Nessana* (Princeton, 1958) 3:310.

[9] Bruni, *I funerali*,146–151.

[10] See A. Jacob, "L'euchologe de Porphyre Uspenski. Cod. Leningr. gr. 226 (X^{e} siècle)," *Le Muséon* 78 (1965) 199, nos. 217–220; S. Parenti, *L'eucologio manoscritto Γ.β. IV (X sec.) della Biblioteca di Grottaferrata. Edizione.* Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum (Rome, 1994) 53–54, nos. 232–237, and the euchologia from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries *Sinai gr. 958, 959, 962* and *1036* (A.Dmitr, 35, 57, 81, and 148).

[11] An excellent analysis may be found in B. Botte, "Les plus anciennes formules de prière pour les morts," in *La maladie et la mort du chrétien,* 83-99.

[12] On this manuscript see S. Parenti, "La celebrazione delle Ore del Venerdì Santo nell'eucologio *Γ.β. X* di Grottaferrata (X–XI sec.)," *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata,* n.s., 44 (1990) 81–125.

six proemial psalms of Matins are recited. These are replaced by Psalm 90 if the deceased is a monk. At the end of the psalm there is a litany by the deacon and the prayer "God of all spirits. . . ." Then the Alleluia is sung and Psalm 118, as at monastic Matins for Saturday. Next is sung the canon, also proper to the monastic tradition, interrupted three times by a diaconal litany and presidential prayer. This is followed by Lauds (Psalms 148–150) with the respective hymns between the psalm verses.

Finally there is a series of three liturgical units, each consisting of a psalm and an antiphon (Psalms 22, 23, 83), a diaconal litany and presidential prayer, a hymn (κάθισμα) and a reading from St. Paul; the third time there is also a gospel reading. A litany of supplication (ἐκτενή) brings this triple structure to an end.

At this point the codex provides for the final farewell (ἀσπασμός) to the deceased by those present. It directs the celebrant to bless the oil, specifying that he use the same formula employed for the blessing of the prebaptismal oil. There is even an explicit reference to the previous pages.[13] As the body is placed in the tomb a hymn (τροπάριον) is sung. This is simply Psalm 117:19 with Psalm 131:14 interpolated and a Marian hymn in conclusion. What we are seeing is probably a direct influence of the Roman-Germanic Pontifical:

Tunc incipiat cantor antiphonam: Aperite mihi portas iustitiae; ingressus in eas confitebor domino; haec porta domini, iusti intrabunt in eam. Ps. Confitemini. . . . Hic claudant sepulchrum et cantent istam antiphonam: Haec requies mea in saeculum saeculi; hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam. Ps. Memento, domine.[14]

This Roman-Byzantine contamination should not surprise us; it is not an isolated example in the codex.[15] Then the celebrant pours the blessed oil on the body three times as he sings the Alleluia. This is exactly as in the baptismal rite when, just before the immersion, the celebrant pours oil into the baptistery, also singing on this occasion the Alleluia. The paschal symbolism, based on Romans 6:3-5, is obvious:

[13] Grottaferrata *Γ.β. X,* f. 80v: "See above in [the rite of] holy Baptism [f. 49r], where it is written."

[14] *PRG* 2, 300, n. 61; 302, n. 69.

[15] A. Strittmatter, "The Latin Prayer 'Ad infantes Consignandos' in the Byzantine Rite of Confirmation," OCP 21 (1955) 308–320.

the tomb, like the baptismal font, is a place of death but at the same time a place of resurrection.

Next there is a prayer for those present, and after the stele has been placed on the tomb, the celebrant blesses it, making the sign of the cross with a hoe. This concludes the funeral rite. The rite is followed by a collection of prayers for various groups (hegumen, bishop, monk, deacon, child). This, together with the hymns, which are envisioned but not given, seems to be the only variable element.

4. *The Constantinople Tradition*

The few liturgical sources from the capital, such as the cathedral τυπικόν and the euchologion of Strateghios (*Paris Coislin* 213 from 1027), priest and chaplain of the patriarchal oratories, do not allow us to trace the shape of the funeral rites in Constantinople with any degree of certainty. All we can draw from the τυπικόν is a list of readings for the Eucharistic celebration,[16] and from the euchologion a simple list of orations, more or less as in the *Barberini* but over two centuries later.[17] This situation has led some authors to wonder if and how the Christians of New Rome celebrated funerals during the time prior to the apparition of the first ritual known to us.

Starting from an analysis of the formula of *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X,* Bruni goes into the threefold structure constituted by Psalms 22, 23, and 83. He thinks they were used in a vigil that was independent of and older than the plan for celebration given in the codex, which, as we have already noted, was largely inspired by monastic Matins.[18] According to Arranz, such a vigil might perhaps be identified with the Παννύχις, a partial vigil celebrated after Vespers in the Constantinople Liturgy of the Hours. He tries to trace its essential elements either in the manuscript tradition or in the present rites.[19]

[16] J. Matéos, *Le typicon de la Grande Eglise* (Rome, 1962–1963) 2:194–197.

[17] Described in A.Dmitr, 1012–1013. Prayer of incensing for a layperson (= *BAR* 264), with one alternative (= *BAR* 266), prayer at the bowing of the head or κεφαλοκλίσια (= *BAR* 265) for a presbyter, followed by the κεφαλοκλίσια for a deacon, for a deceased person with no further specification, for a child, for a monk, and a formula of anointing. An edition of this important liturgical source, soon to be published, has been prepared by this writer together with Stefano Parenti.

[18] Bruni, *I funerali,*172.

[19] M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytèrales de la 'Pannychis' de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin et la 'Panikhida' des défunts," *OCP* 41 (1975) 2:314–343 (reprinted with the same title in the volume *La maladie e la mort du chrétien,* 31–82).

On the one hand, the general hypothesis of the vigil is supported in the writings of the Fathers, for example the testimony of Gregory of Nyssa about the funeral of his sister Macrina († 379).[20] On the other hand, a simple identification with the Παννύχις fails to account for the fact that the oldest description of this vigil is already marked by many elements from the monastic Liturgy of the Hours. But as long as we have no deeper and more reliable studies on the structures of the Liturgy of the Hours, there is no need to give in to subjective and scientifically unverifiable impressions.

The only absolutely certain facts are these: between the eighth and ninth century we have no funeral *rites,* only *prayers,* just as in the case of the anointing of the sick and confession; and, structurally speaking, the first rite shows traces of ὄρθρος or monastic Matins.[21]

5. *Funeral Rites in the Monastic Books*

We can already see in the *Barberini* euchologion how the editor has placed the prayers for the dead after those for the different stages of monastic initiation.[22] This proximity will continue for centuries in the σχηματολόγιον, a book that gives almost exclusively not only the prayers but also the rite itself for investiture in the monastic habit (σχῆμα) and for the funeral of a monk. The manuscript tradition for this book is quite considerable and runs from the eleventh to the sixteenth century.[23]

The oldest seems to be the Italo-Greek codex *Grottaferrata Γ.β. V + Γ.a. XXV* (1018/1019). Although it is seriously mutilated, it can be traced back to the *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X* tradition (baptismal perspective and Western influences; ff. 1r–7r). Besides the usual series of prayers, the codex also contains a rich collection of canons and other poetic compositions for various groups of deceased (monks, presbyters, nuns, men, women, and children), a sign that we are still looking at a single rite.

[20] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vie de Sainte Macrine.* Introduction, critical text, translation, notes and index by P. Maraval, SCh 178 (Paris, 1971) chaps. 22–24 (see also 77–89 of the Introduction).

[21] This opinion is also shared by I. M. Phountoules, Ἀκολουθία τοῦ μνημοσύνου Κείμενα Λειτουργικῆς 20 (Thessalonika, 1979).

[22] See *BAR*, nos. 244–256, 258–263 (monastic initiation), nos. 264–270 (funerals).

[23] Examples of it can be seen in M. Wawrik, *Initiatio monastica in liturgia byzantina. Officiorum schematis magni et parvi necnon rasophoratus exordia et evolutio,* OCA 180 (Rome, 1968), and Bruni, *I funerali,* 43–79 passim.

Again in the eleventh century distinct funeral rites exclusively for monks seem to predominate in Italy. We have a good example in the *Grottaferrata Γ.β. XLIII* (ff. 108ff.). The rite provides for three stations: (a) in the cell, where the body is washed and dressed; (b) in the church, where the funeral takes place; (c) at the cemetery, where the burial takes place. These stations are linked to their respective processions. Distinctive elements in the celebration include the antiphonal singing of Psalm 118, which is divided into three sections with a presidential prayer at the end of each; Psalms 22, 23, and 114; a large selection of hymns; the celebration of the Word; the anointing of the body with chrism and oil; the final farewell. When the procession has reached the grave accompanied by the singing of the Τρισάγιον, some prayers are said, and there is read the passage of Ezekiel (37:1-14) from Matins of Holy Saturday. An appendix contains a selection of readings for the Eucharistic Liturgy and a selection of hymns.[24]

Around the twelfth century in the Middle East, while the basic structure of monastic Matins (Psalm 118) remains intact, we see that hymnography occupies a greater part. This will become the distinctive trait of the Oriental recension of monastic funerals.[25] At the same time in southern Italy two types of celebration are found in monasteries. The first depends on the *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X* (Psalms 22, 23 and 85 with Scripture readings and a rite of anointing similar to that of baptism with Western influences); the second includes Psalm 118 and the gradual Psalms 119 and 120.[26] On the other hand, the monastic σχηματολόγια may also contain funeral rites for laity, leading to a great number of possibilities for celebration that have yet to be rigorously classified.[27] But even without good studies, we note that in their evolution they are substantially the same as the Gallican rituals, created in the monasteries and then "adapted" for funerals of the laity.

[24] Some of these have been published by M. Arco Magri, "L'inedito canone de requie di Andrea Cretese," *Helikon* 9–10 (1969–1970) 475–476; eadem, "Un canone inedito di Teodoro Studita nel cod. Messanensis gr. 153," *Umanità e Storia*, 2, Writings in honor of A. Attisani (Naples, 1971); eadem, *Clemente innografo e gli inediti canoni cerimoniali. Prolegomeni, testo, incipitario,* Biblioteca di Helikon: Testi e studi 12 (Rome, 1979).

[25] Thus in the codex *Sinai gr.* 963 and the later *Sinai gr.* 964 (described in A.Dmitr, 135–139, 246).

[26] See *Vatican gr.* 1836, *Messina gr.* 172, and *Vatican gr.* 1969.

[27] See *Messina gr.* 172.

6. Textus Receptus *and Present Practice*

The advent of the printing press served to fix the Oriental recension of the manuscript tradition. As a result, funerals were of four types: for laity, for clerics, for monks, and for children. Aside from special readings and hymns, the four plans for celebration may be seen as the result of a single funeral rite frozen at three stages in its development. The determining factor was the many forms assumed over the centuries by monastic Matins.[28]

In the Orthodox Church of Greece, the rite has been greatly simplified and made uniform, so that a single type of funeral is provided for "bishops, sovereigns and laity."[29] As usual, it consists of three parts: in the home, in church, and at the cemetery. The customary ἀκολουθία of the Τρισάγιον takes place in the home, and the hymn is sung as the procession moves toward the church (this part is in parentheses). In church there is the singing of Psalm 118, divided into three sections but reduced by a tenth (eighteen verses), with a collect between each section. This is followed at the end by the εὐλογιτάρια, the κοντάκιον, the στιχιρά attributed to John Damascene, the Beatitudes, the epistle-gospel, collect, prayer of absolution (only if a bishop is present), final farewell, and dismissal. At the cemetery the ἀκολουθία of the Τρισάγιον is repeated, and oil and ashes are poured on the grave. A few options are given for the funeral of a presbyter or a child (gospel and/or prayer).

Rather than a true reform, this is a simplification of the full rite, emphasizing κοντάκιον, those parts that in the popular imagination are the high points of an Orthodox funeral (εὐλογιτάρια, κοντάκια, etc.). The methods and results are bound to remind us of the Roman reform of funeral rites that led to the Ritual of 1614. Even though four centuries have passed, it seems that the same principles have been followed.

7. *Pastoral and Theological Prospects*

Looking over the bibliography on funerals in the Byzantine tradition, we occasionally get the impression that for some authors time

[28] P. Kovalevsky, "Les funérailles selon le rite de Pâques et les prières pour les morts pendant le temps de Pâques à l'Ascension," in *La maladie e la mort du chrétien,* 141–153; A. Kniazeff, "La mort du prêtre d'après le 'Trebnik' slave," ibid., 155–192; A. Nelidow, "Rite des funéraille des enfants," ibid., 229–242.

[29] Μικρὸν Εὐχολόγιον ἢ Ἁγιασματάριον (Athens, 1988) 195–218.

suddenly stood still. Many of them study or describe the funeral rites solely from the viewpoint reflected in the liturgical books, which, even today, is that of a late medieval rural society. It would be no less naive to imagine that the various rites in the euchologion are used today just as they are, not only in New York but also in cities like Moscow, Athens, Bucharest, or Sofia. The result is that, at least in large cities, funerals in the East now pose the same problems as they do in the Christian West.

In the first place, there is the problem of structure. For example, the ancient manuscript repertory provides more than twenty presidential prayers according to groups. Of these, four are used today in funerals of clerics, two in funerals of children, and only one in funerals of monks and laity. In the latter case it is repeated nine times during the rite. Then there are those things inherent in the content. The hymns often depict visions as terrifying as any in the Roman-Gallican sacramentaries. These overshadow the biblical themes of the presidential prayers.

On the other hand, it would be most fitting to restore and exploit the baptismal/paschal vision of the funeral rites, to which, as we have seen, the earliest ritual for the Byzantine Rite bears unequivocal witness. Greater emphasis should be given to the Church's solidarity with the relatives of the deceased and to her sympathy, so well expressed in one of the prayers of the ancient *Barberini.* In this way it will become clearer, as L. V. Thomas has written in the title of his book, that funerals are primarily *for the peace of the living*.[30]

[30] L. V. Thomas, *Rites de mort: Pour la paix des vivants* (Paris, 1985).

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19

Funeral Rites in Rome and the Non-Roman West

I. THE OLDEST FORMS OF THE ROMAN FUNERAL LITURGY

The oldest forms of the Roman funeral liturgies are found in the Roman *Ordines* under the following manuscript titles: *Ordo* XLIX *(O)*, Codex Phillips 1667 *(PH)*, the Sacramentary of Rheinau *(RH)*, and Cologne Ms. 123 *(K)*.

The first Roman Ritual that contains the oldest forms of the Roman funeral liturgy was published by M. Andrieu as *Ordo* XLIX of his medieval *Ordines Romani.* The text is found in an eleventh-century manuscript, the *Ottobonianus latinus* 312[1] of the Vatican Library *(O).* Though the text is late, the rite is considered much older.[2]

The Roman provenance of *O*[3] is amply shown by M. Andrieu, who compares it with the Roman Pontifical composed at the end of the twelfth century *(PR)*,[4] and by D. Sicard, who develops this Roman

[1] M. Andrieu, ed., *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge* (henceforth *OR*), in Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Études et Documents 28 (Louvain, 1956) 4:529–530. H. Frank, "Der älteste erhaltene Ordo defunctorum der römischen Liturgie und sein Fortleben in Totenagenden des frühen Mittelalters," in *ALW* 7/2 (1962) 363–365. D. Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort dans l'Eglise latine des origines à la réforme carolingienne,* in LQF 63 (Münster, 1978) 4–6.

[2] Cf. Andrieu, *OR* 1 (1931) 467–470. Cf. C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources,* trans. W. G. Storey and N. K. Rasmussen (Washington, 1986) 144f.; Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort,* 4–6.

[3] Andrieu, *OR* 4:523–525.

[4] Cf. Andrieu, *OR* 4:524. For a background study of this pontifical, see Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy,* 249f. For its funeral rites, cf. Andrieu, ed., *Le Pontifical Romain au moyen âge,* vol. 1, *Pontifical Romain du XII*e *siècle* (henceforth *PR*), ST 86 (Vatican City, 1939; reprint 1984) 279–288.

origin even better when he compares *O* with both *PR* and the Romano-Germanic Pontifical of the tenth century *(PRG),* the source of the former.[5] There are also a number of passages common to *O* and a derivative of it, the *Ambrosian Ordo infirmorum vel mortuorum* of the eleventh century published by C. Lambot.[6]

Another major document source of the Roman funeral liturgy, probably representing Roman usage more closely, is found in the Sacramentary of Rheinau.[7] This document, like the *PH* manuscript, dates from around 800 A.D. Its funeral service is a mixture of the older Roman *Ordo defunctorum (O)* and the liturgical formulas of a Gelasian Sacramentary of the eighth century. Another early manuscript witness that verifies and amplifies the scene of the Roman funeral liturgy is the *Ordo defunctorum* of the tenth century; it became known through the work of G. Haenni.[8]

Besides these Roman *Ordines* that are the major sources, there are other minor sources to which we shall refer later.[9] We shall also trace the *Ordines* of death of Gallican and monastic origin.

[5] Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort,* 4–6. For the funeral rites of this pontifical, see C. Vogel and R. Elze, eds., *Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique du X^e siècle* (henceforth *PRG*), ST 227 (Vatican City, 1963) 281–305. As regards both prayers and rites, the *PRG* remained the source common to all the Roman episcopal books of the twelfth century. As such, the *PR* could not have escaped its abiding influence; cf. V. K. Owusu, *The Roman Funeral Liturgy: History, Celebration and Theology* (Nettetal, 1993) 9–11.

[6] C. Lambot, *Ordo infirmorum vel mortuorum du XI^e siècle,* text in *The North Italian Services of the Eleventh Century,* HBS 67 (London, 1931) 42–62; cf. Andrieu, *OR* 4:525.

[7] *Sacramentarium Rheinaugiense, Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, cod. Rh 30, f 151–155* (henceforth *RH*). A partial edition exists in M. Gerbert, *Monumenta Veteris Liturgiae Alemannicae* (St. Blasien, 1777) 1:313f. Cf. Frank, "Der älteste erhaltene," 362–363. Also Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort,* 20–22. We follow Sicard's work as a basis. The numbering is our own: V. K. Owusu: *The Roman Funeral Liturgy,* 14. For a critical edition of this manuscript see A. Hänggi and A. Schönherr, eds., *Sacramentarium Rheinaugiense,* SF 15 (Fribourg, 1970), 272–276, nos. 1330–1341. The death *Ordo* proper can be found in nos. 1336–1341.

[8] Haenni, "Un 'Ordo defunctorum' du X^e siècle. Cologne: Cathedrale, Ms. 123, f. 80r," *EphLit* 73 (1959) 431–434. Cf. Frank, "Der älteste erhaltene," 362–363. Cf. also Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort,* 11–17.

[9] *Tropaire-Prosaire de Saint-Martial de Limoges. Paris, bibliotheque nationale, lat.* 1240, *f.* 14*r*–16*v,* tenth century (henceforth *M*). Cf. Haenni, "Un 'Ordo defunctorum' du X^e siècle," 432, note 2. Cf. also P.-M. Gy, "Collectaire, rituel, processional," *RSPT* 44 (1960) 457. There is a critical edition in Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort,* 17–19.

The main similarities and differences in the rites of the major *Ordines* indicate the existence of three traditions or structural patterns of the Roman liturgy of death.[10] The first tradition, attested to in *PH,* reflects the simplest basic pattern of the Roman funeral liturgy. The body was prepared in the home, then brought in procession to the church, where it was finally buried. The role of faith in this process is well described by R. Rutherford.[11] This tradition, however, lacks the viaticum and the prayer.

The second, more general tradition that *O* of the eleventh century reports[12] adds the phases of the preparation for death, the event of death itself, and the procession to the cemetery from the church. It contains reference to the Office for the dead as well.

The third tradition, which *RH* and *K* report, is distinguished from those that preceded it, above all, by its unique description of the final phase of the funeral celebration: the procession to the cemetery, distant from the church, where the prayer service was celebrated and the body was entombed according to the rubrics. *K* reports that chants were usually employed for this rite. It mentions the church only for the Mass, and the procession only for the entombment.

Taken together, these *Ordines* enable us to describe the most significant characteristics of the Roman funeral liturgy during the first period of documented liturgical history. Therefore, rather than speaking of the oldest form of the Roman funeral liturgy, we speak of the oldest *forms.* All the traditions contained elements that influenced the customs of the later ages. To arrive at the synthesized characteristics of the ancient Roman funeral liturgy, we must appeal to all of them.

No. 163 of the Collections of Subiaco (CLX), f. 183v–184r (tenth century). Cf. Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort*, 19–20.

Sacramentaire de Lorsch, Rome, bibl. vat. palatinus latinus 485, *f.* 58*v*–61*r,* ninth century (henceforth *LO*). Cf. H. Ehrensberger, *Libri liturgici bibliothecae apostolicae vaticanae manu scripti* (Freiburg i. Br., 1897) 396–398. Reproduced in Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort*, 22–25.

The Leofric Missal, Oxford, Bodl, ms. 579 *(2675),* ninth–tenth century (henceforth *LE*). Cf. F. E. Warren, *The Leofric Missal as Used in the Cathedral of Exeter 1050–1072* (Oxford, 1883) 198–203. Cf. Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort*, 25–26.

[10] Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort*, 27f.

[11] R. Rutherford, *The Death of a Christian: The Order of Christian Funerals,* rev. ed., Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church 7 (Collegeville, Minn., 1990) 40.

[12] Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort,* 27. It can, strictly speaking, be said to have been what gave rise to the other witnesses of *Ordines*.

Obviously the celebration of funerals would have followed varied traditions. One can well imagine that a funeral would have been more solemn in the city than in the countryside, and the funeral of a cleric more elaborate in general than that of a lay person. Each local community must have followed its own traditional liturgical usage; in fact, it is far from clear whether in the early period every deceased Christian was buried with liturgical rites.

II. THE RITUAL FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMAN FUNERAL LITURGY

In the examination of the expressions of faith celebrated in the Roman funeral liturgy of various epochs, we shall limit ourselves to the Roman *Ordo* of the seventh century, the Roman-Gallican *Ordines* (especially those of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries), the Roman Ritual of 1614, and the Roman Ritual of 1969. We shall also take a look at Roman monastic rituals of burial insofar as they have an immediate bearing on our subject.

1. *The Roman Funeral* Ordo *of the Seventh Century*

The study of the Roman *Ordines* of death permits us to sort out what we can call the "ancient Roman ritual of death," better represented by the first Roman *Ordo* of death that we know of, that is, *Ordo* XLIX *(O).* The spirit of this ancient Roman Ritual can be understood in the following way: When a Christian is about to die, he or she, surrounded by the Christian community, prepares by receiving the Eucharist, *quia communio erit ei defensor et adiutor in resurrectione iustorum,* and the reading of the Passion of the Lord. For the ancient Church, the ideal and exemplary death came after such a process.

Death itself is accompanied by a series of antiphons grouped around the response *Subvenite sancti Dei* and the singing of Psalm 113: *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*.

The post-death rites in the house consist of the funeral washing of the body, the placing in the coffin, and a "house-leaving" rite with Psalm 96: *Dominus regnavit.* A procession then takes the dead body into the church for a service of psalms, responses, and readings from the Book of Job. Among the psalms used are Psalm 41 *(Quemadmodum),* which expresses the desire to be admitted into the presence of God, and Psalm 4 *(Cum invocarem),* which sings the confidence in God's protection. No Mass is celebrated. A second procession carries the body from the church to the cemetery with particular psalms, for example,

Psalm 14 *(Domine quis habitabit)* and Psalm 50 *(Miserere mei Deus)* among others. At the entombment, the paschal psalm *Confitemini Domino* is sung, with *Aperite mihi portas iustitiae* as its antiphon. At this point the funeral ritual of *O* comes to an end.

Certain points portray important characteristics of this ancient tradition: death is understood as the soul leaving the body. The whole ritual is placed in a Eucharistic, ecclesial, and biblico-psalmic setting.

Death as a *transitus* is conveyed by the terms *exitus, egredere, subvenite, In exitu Israel,* the antiphon "May the choir of angels receive you," and that expressive antiphon *In paradisum* ("May the angels lead you into God's paradise, may the martyrs receive you on your arrival, and may they lead you into the holy city of Jerusalem").

Central to this liturgy for the dead is the procession. This signifies the journey of the Christian from this world to paradise; it is to bid farewell to the familial environment and to honor the cemetery as the new abode of the deceased. All told, the procession expresses the celebration of death as a celebration of a "passover," a visible way of showing this transition from "exile to the Promised Land." The procession, as well as the whole celebration, is visibly inspired by biblical overtones in the psalms and the antiphons. The constant theme expressed by these psalms is that the deceased is heading toward glory and resurrection rather than corruption.

Importance is given to the paschal character of death in Psalms 113 and 117: in the manner of a paschal "exodus," the dead person undertakes his or her own exodus from "Egypt," or liberation from this earthly exile, into the Promised Land. The idea is also conveyed by two very ancient chants: the response *Subvenite sancti Dei* and the antiphon *In paradisum*. The hope of the resurrection gives a joyful tone to the whole ritual.

Throughout the ritual the communal dimension comes to the fore. The liturgical reunion around the dying symbolizes the earthly community accompanying the dead in their *migratio,* to be welcomed by the inhabitants of heaven, that is, their ancestors: the saints, martyrs, and patriarchs; by the messengers of God, the angels; and finally by the Lord of the house, who personally incorporates them into the great family of the saints. The Christian who dies therefore passes from one community to another.

The ancient Roman euchology presents God as a living God who sees to it that his people live with him after death. In union with

Christ, they are not destroyed but changed for a beatific life. The community, conscious of the survival of those who die, sometimes places prayers in their mouths, as though addressing God *in persona defuncti*. With joy and hope, they ask God for mercy on the dead person. This is, without doubt, an essential trait of this epoch.

The washing of the body symbolizes the cleansing from sin. Thus any sprinkling will also have that meaning: the purification of the dead person and his or her transformation into a new creation.

The elements in this most ancient Roman funeral ritual give meaning to death as a paschal journey symbolized in triumphant processions. It is a *transitus* related to Christ's own passing from death to life, to the serenity of paschal hope. This is the basis of the Roman funeral liturgy.

2. *The Roman-Gallican Funeral* Ordines *of the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Centuries*

For a good picture of the Roman rite, it is useful to take a look at some Western non-Roman funeral liturgies. These are mixed liturgies that date back to the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. At this time the Roman *Ordines* of death integrated some local usages of Western Europe, where they were introduced.

The Gelasian Sacramentary of the eighth century, like the Sacramentary of Gellone, the Sacramentary of Rheinau, and the Gregorian Sacramentary of the ninth century,[13] as well as the Gallican missals represented by the *Missale Gothicum, Missale Gallicanum Vetus, Missale Francorum,* and *Missale Bobbiense,* attest to the mixed nature of this liturgy.

The principal features of this mixed liturgy are its division into two parts: death preceded by the *commendatio animae* and the prayers *post obitum hominis*. It is also characterized by its symbolism. The washing and dressing of the body symbolize the Redeemer's act of washing (purifying) the soul and dressing it with a heavenly robe: *vestem*

[13] A. Dumas, *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis* (henceforth *GeG*) (Turnhout, 1981) 460–468; *RH* 272–276. See J. Deshusses, ed., *Le sacramentaire Grégorien,* SF 16 (Freiburg, 1979). The part we refer to on funerals is the *Supplementum Anianense* (henceforth *SUP*), 457–463. The Roman liturgy assimilated many older liturgical usages native to Gaul (often improperly called "Gallican") and ended by producing a type of hybrid or mixed liturgy that may be termed Romano-Frankish. Cf. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy,* 2.

caelestem; et inter lavantes stolas in fonte luminis vestem lavit (*RH* 1333); *stola immortalitatis* (*GrS* 1407).

Furthermore, death appears as a second baptism. The washing of the body is a reminder of baptism and the clothing with the baptismal garment (*GrS* 1407; *RH* 1333). As in the first baptism, this too includes a liberation from Satan and sin, a meeting with God and an entering into the communion of the saints.

In the Gelasian and Gallican *Ordines,* the journey into the beyond is a long and dangerous one. The prayers portray death as a snare from which one is to be delivered: *quem Dominus de laqueo huius saeculi liberare dignatus est* (*GrS* 1411). Expressions like "the gates of hell" and "the way of darkness" show an obscure vision of the event of death. Others dramatically portray the fear of the infernal world: *ignis flammaque tartaris* (*RH* 1332); *umbrae mortis; chaos et caligo tenebrarum, dolor horrendae visionis; poenalis timor* (*GrS* 1410; also *GrS* 1407, 1408). This is the epoch when the responsory *Libera me, Domine* was born.[14]

This mixed liturgy enables us, however, to make a different anthropological observation. While the ancient Roman funeral ritual was concerned with the *homo totus,* both body and soul, the Gallican liturgy was concerned only with the soul. It had an eschatology of a separated soul. This negative attitude toward death made the Christian community pray incessantly for the dead[15] in the Eucharistic celebration. It became a common practice and constituted the central part of the Christian funeral. *RH* 1339 specifically says that the priest "celebrates Mass," a detail that one does not meet in the old Roman *Ordo*. At this time the priest became the sole mediator between the community and God for the spiritual fate of the dead.

From a paschal, sober, and peaceful vision of the Christian *transitus,* therefore, there is a passage to a dramatic vision of judgment and the need to ask for God's mercy for the dead. Preoccupied with the uncertain fate of the soul, the euchology asks God to receive the soul of the dead into the "bosom of Abraham." Surprisingly, neither the figure of Christ nor the paschal event plays much of a role in the

[14] Cf. M. Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica,* vol. 2: *L'anno liturgico: Il Breviario.* 2nd ed. (Milan-Genoa, 1950–1956) 336–337. This text found in the Roman Ritual of 1614 is a combination of *Libera me . . . atque ventura ira* (*PRG*) and *Dies illa, dies irae . . . et amara valde (L'antiphonaire de Harther [HAR]).*

[15] J. Ntedika, *L'évocation de l'au-delà dans la prière pour les morts* (Louvain and Paris, 1971) 46–83, has a detailed chapter on the protection of the soul against the enemy.

Roman-Gallican funeral rituals. Death is not viewed as related to the paschal mystery of Christ, nor is the dead person presented as participating in Christ's resurrection.

3. Influences of Monastic Rituals

The monastic rituals are characterized by their meditation on death and their elaborate and complex ceremony. Typical of the rites of funeral within monastic communities is that of the Cluniacs.[16] The abbot or prior is summoned to administer the sacraments of penance, anointing, and viaticum to the dying monk, while the brethren keep constant watch over him. They, together with the dying monk, solemnly sing the Creed. A crucifix and lighted candles are placed around the dying person. At the moment of death, the sick man is sprinkled with ashes, and the cloister door is beaten rapidly to summon the community to commend the departing soul to God. The community then sings Vespers for the dead, followed by Matins. There follows the washing and clothing of the body and its placement on the bier. The bier is then carried into the church, where there is continuous recitation of psalms until burial, to be interrupted only by the Offices and Mass. Mass is offered the next day for the dead, and the deacon incenses the body. When Mass is ended, the body is carried to the place of burial, while the community in procession chants psalms. On arrival at the grave, the body is incensed by the priest and sprinkled with holy water, after which it is buried. The procession returns to the church and the bells are tolled.

A number of these monastic ceremonies connected with burial may be added from other witnesses. In his *Rationale divinorum officiorum*,[17] William Durandus of Mende (1230–1296) refers to the reading of the Passion at the bedside of the dying person.[18] According to him, the grave is sprinkled with holy water and incensed; then a laurel may be

[16] For a detailed description, cf. G. Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Development of Christian Burial Rites* (London, 1977) 64–71. For this monastic manuscript, cf. *Coutumes anciennes du monastère de Cluny,* end of the eleventh century. K. Hallinger, ed., *Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis abbatis, Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum* (Siegburg, 1983) 191–206.

[17] Durandus, *Rationale divinorum officiorum,* VII, xxv, 35. This is the liturgical synthesis par excellence of the Middle Ages.

[18] The eleventh-century constitutions of Lanfranc also require the tolling of the bell at the moment of death so that those hearing it may pray for the departed by saying the *Subvenite*.

placed in the grave to signify the continuing life of those who die in Christ.

It was in this monastic context that the Office for the dead was developed. Vespers were said while the body was being prepared for burial, whereas Matins and Lauds, which were sung the following day, were each built around a lesson from the Book of Job.[19] The Office, and indeed all the rites for the dead, emphasized the penal nature of death; the *Gloria, Alleluias,* blessings before lessons, and other joyful responses were omitted.[20] This penal note is particularly apparent in the Sequence, *Dies irae,* which eventually became the official Sequence of the Mass for the dead in the reform of the Roman liturgy in 1570.

4. *The Roman Ritual of* 1614

The ritual of funerals published in 1614 after the Council of Trent[21] remained in use up to the reform of 1969. This was, in fact, the first official Roman Ritual, but its way had been prepared by Alberto Castellani's *Liber sacerdotalis,* known also as *Sacerdotale Romanum,* and particularly the Ritual of Cardinal Santori. This Ritual marks what we can call a deliberate rupture with its immediate predecessors.[22] It abbreviates and simplifies the rite that takes place after the Mass and at the cemetery as in the traditional Roman Ritual.

These are its major characteristics. It provides for a procession from the home of the deceased to the church, preceded by the sprinkling of the dead body with holy water while Psalm 129 *(De profundis),* with its antiphon *Si iniquitates,* is sung. For the funeral procession to the church, the *Miserere,* with the antiphon *Exsultabunt Domino ossa humiliata,* is sung; this concludes with *Requiem aeternam;* then the Office for the dead and the funeral Mass, followed by the absolution, are celebrated.

[19] This is a tradition which is already found in *O*.

[20] Durandus, *Rationale,* VII, xxxv, 27, 28. Cf. Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial,* 67.

[21] This Roman Ritual of 1614 is represented by the *Rituale Romanum Pauli V Pontificis Maximi, iussu editum aliorumque pontificum cura recognitum atque auctoritate SSMI D. N. PII PAPAE XI, ad normam codicis iuris canonici accomodatum cui accedit, benedictionum et instructionum, appendix, editio prima post typicam* (Rome, 1927). Cf. especially P.-M. Gy, "Les funérailles d'après le rituel de 1614," *MD* (1955) 70–82; Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial,* 70–73; L. Brandolini, "Il nuovo 'Ordo Exsequiarum,'" *EphLit* 84 (1970) 129–148; P. Rouillard, "I riti dei funerali," *Anàmnesis* 7:208–209; F. Brovelli, "Il nuovo rito delle esequie," *ScC* 103 (1975) 533–536.

[22] Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial,* 71.

The absolution concludes with the prayer *Deus, cui proprium est misereri,* which refers to the soul on a dangerous journey, yet protected by the angels. Then follows the procession from the church to the place of burial. The antiphons *In paradisum* and *Chorus angelorum* are sung.

On arrival at the grave, if it has not already been blessed, the priest blesses it, saying the prayer *Deus cuius miseratione,* the coffin is sprinkled and incensed again, and then it is placed in the grave. The canticle *Benedictus* is said, with *Ego sum resurrectio et vita* as the antiphon, followed by the *Kyrie* and the Lord's Prayer, during which the body is sprinkled and incensed. Then after the prayer *Fac quaesumus* has been said, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the grave, saying the response *Requiem aeternam,* followed by *Requiescat in pace*. On the return from the place of burial to the church, the *De profundis* is again said with the antiphon *Si iniquitates,* thus maintaining a prayerful unity in the funeral liturgy from beginning to end.

The somber note of the Middle Ages is still apparent in the Ritual of 1614.[23] God is there to examine or to judge the dead before his tribunal: *Dies irae, dies illa!* However, something of the paschal and joyful orientation of the primitive Christian funeral liturgy remains in its concluding part. The *Subvenite, In paradisum, Chorus angelorum,* and *Benedictus,* with its antiphon on Jesus who is the Resurrection and the Life, welcome the body into the church. The Mass is the central point of the funeral rite, although its celebration in the presence of the dead body does not seem to have been primitive or universal. At the Mass, the Church implores the Lord so that through the Eucharist, the soul may be definitively purified and counted among the elect.

Also, one notices that the ritual is exclusively a prayer for the dead. As such, no prayer is said for the living, nor is there any prayer for the mourning family.

The Ritual of 1614 tried to integrate the varied contributions of the centuries and to produce a rite marked by restraint and brevity. However, theological and liturgical renewal under new pastoral exigencies began to expose its disadvantages and advocated for a return to the paschal dimension of the primitive Christian funeral. It needed to be a funeral in which the prayers were not exclusively for the dead but also

[23] Psalm 113 *(In exitu),* with its paschal and baptismal associations, is replaced by *De profundis,* and the tone of the psalmody is generally penitential.

for the family in mourning. This was the task the new Roman funeral ritual took upon itself.

III. THE ROMAN FUNERAL RITUAL OF 1969

1. *The New Ritual in General*

On August 15, 1969, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship published the official Latin version of the *Ordo exsequiarum*[24] (henceforth *Oe*). The name itself, *Ordo exsequiarum* (the Rite of Funerals), suggests a broader understanding of *exsequiae* to include all the rituals with which human death is surrounded from the time of death itself until the burial.[25] *Oe* thus provides basic patterns for a funeral liturgy that addresses all aspects of Christian death.

The reform of the funeral liturgy was based on the premise that the funeral Ritual inherited from Trent did not convey adequately the doctrinal richness of the Christian vision of death, nor did it allow for the diverse cultural circumstances. The Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II directed that the Roman Ritual for funerals should be revised to express better the paschal character of Christian death and correspond more closely with the circumstances and traditions found in various regions. This applies to the liturgical colors to be used (*SC* 81). The revision was also to make sure that the rites for the burial of children would have a proper Mass (*SC* 82). Right from the start the revision of the Ritual was to respond to a specific theology: to manifest the paschal character of Christian death. It was also to respond to a specific anthropology: to take into account the diversity of the cultural situations and to be adaptive to the milieu and the age of the dead.

To begin with, the commission on the reform sampled various funeral practices. It came out with three main types. According to the first type, that is, the traditional Roman Ritual from the eighth century generally used in Italy and France, the principal celebration takes place in the church. According to the second type, used principally in German-speaking countries, the body is taken directly from the house

[24] *Rituale Romanum ex decreto sacrosancti oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP VI promulgatum, Ordo Exsequiarum* (henceforth *Oe*), editio typica (Vatican City, 1969). Cf. also International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn., 1989, 1985), for a vernacular of the typical edition of *Oe* for the dioceses of the United States of America.

[25] Rutherford, *The Death of a Christian,* 113.

to the cemetery, where the principal liturgical rite takes place. Lastly, according to the third type, the essential funeral rite takes place in the house of the deceased, either because of the great distance from the church or cemetery or in view of local traditions. Such usage is found in many regions of Africa.[26] The commission decided therefore to prepare three types of funerals rites to be adapted by bishops' conferences (*Oe* 22).

2. *Structure of the New Ritual*

a) Content

The book begins with introductory notes (1–25), a summarized pastoral instruction on the Catholic teaching about the mystery of death and resurrection, and the manner of giving ritual and symbolic expression to this faith in the world of today. The book contains the following elements. A vigil rite takes place in the house or in the church (*Oe* 26–31); a liturgy for the placing of the deceased in the coffin is proposed.

The first type of funeral celebration has three stations, namely, in the house of the dead, in the church, where a Mass or a liturgy of the Word and a *commendatio* are celebrated, and at the cemetery with a blessing of the tomb followed by burial (*Oe* 32–58).

The second type of funeral celebration has two stations: in a chapel where a liturgy of the Word and a *commendatio* take place, and at the tomb with a blessing of the tomb and burial (*Oe* 59–76).

The third type of funeral celebration takes place entirely in the house of the deceased. It consists of a liturgy for the placing of the body in the coffin, a Liturgy of the Word or Mass, and a *commendatio* (*Oe* 77–79). The book also contains funerals for children (*Oe* 80–82).

b) Structure of the rite of funerals

All three funeral rites have the same fundamental elements that constitute the Christian liturgy presented in four moments:

i) The rite of welcome is addressed to the relatives and friends of the dead. It is suggested by human sensitivity and Christian faith (*Oe* 33, 60) and is meant to offer the solace of hope.

ii) The Liturgy of the Word is found in all three types of celebration, consisting of biblical readings, a homily, and a prayer of the faithful

[26] Ibid., 152.

(*Oe* 27, 39–42, 62–64). The principal themes are the paschal mystery and the hope of reunion in the kingdom of God (*Praenotanda* 11).

iii) The celebration of the Eucharist belongs to the very heart of the paschal meaning of Christian death, as the *Praenotanda* recalls from the outset (nos. 1–3). While the first type (*Oe* 39–44) assumes that Mass will be celebrated in the church, it is possible, as in the other two types (*Oe* 59 and 78), to celebrate it at the house where the death occurred. The possibility remains of having a funeral celebration without Mass (*Oe* 46) either because the ceremony is presided over by a lay person (*Oe* 19) or for some other pastoral reason.

iv) The commendation and farewell stand as a final farewell by which the assembled Christian community pays its respects to one of its members before burial, with hope of seeing the departed again (*Oe* 10). It is more meaningful than the old "absolution" that concluded the rite.

3. *The Language of the New Ritual*

While it can be difficult enough to establish communication in normal circumstances, it is even more so in a funeral liturgy. The liturgy is called upon not only to communicate an intelligent and doctrinal message but also to convey words of comfort and solace to the grief-stricken.

a) Signs and symbols

In moments like death, when words very often are not able to express adequately its mystery, signs and symbols help to convey it. At death the first language is silence. It is a sign that shows that the mystery of death cannot be expressed in mere words. The *editio typica* indicates places appropriate for this powerful language (*Oe* 10, 46, and 65), to allow the assembly to reflect upon the word of God and the meaning of the celebration and to pray silently in their hearts. The Easter candle and other candles (*Oe* 38) remind the faithful of Christ's victory over sin and death, and of their sharing in that victory by virtue of Christian initiation. Candles may also show reverence and impart solemnity. The sprinkling with holy water recalls baptism.

Other symbols are also available (*Oe* 38). The deceased is placed in the position in which he or she was used to in the liturgical assembly, that is, facing toward the altar, with the minister facing toward the

people. A pall[27] may be placed over the coffin when it is received at the church as a sign of the Christian dignity of the person; it also signifies that all are equal in the eyes of God (Jas 2:1-9). A book of the Gospels or a Bible may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the word of God and that fidelity to that word leads to eternal life. A cross may also be placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian, marked by his baptism into Jesus' suffering, is brought to the victory of Christ's resurrection.

The liturgical color chosen for funerals should express Christian hope but should not be offensive to human grief or sorrow (*Oe* 22).

b) Hymns, prayers, and readings

The role of singing in the funeral cannot be overstressed. In expressing faith, choral singing is important. "Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from scripture" (*Oe* 28, 25, 39, 47, 49, 52).[28]

The psalms are rich in imagery, symbolism, and feeling (*Oe* 145–166). Intended to be sung whenever possible, they strongly express the suffering and pain, the hope and trust of people of every age and culture and request divine pardon (for example, Psalm 50: *Oe* 35).

c) Processions

Processions symbolize the personal participation of the dead in their own "exodus." The funeral liturgy mirrors the journey of human life, the Christian pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem.

d) Additional elements in the new Ritual

It is assumed, at least in the first and third types of the new funerals, that there will be a vigil of prayer in the home of the deceased. The

[27] Cf. *Order of Christian Funerals,* no. 38. A pall is an ample cloth covering, plain or ornamented, draped over the coffin at a funeral Mass. Usually it is decorated with baptismal symbols and/or a cross, for it is symbolic of the person having been clothed with Christ at baptism and the promise of eternal life for each Christian.

[28] *Order of Christian Funerals,* no. 32.

former Ritual did not indicate this as a liturgical action, even though it was already in use in certain areas.

Oe presents the priest as the normal minister of the rite of funerals (no. 16). However, it provides for the case where the place of the priest may be taken by a deacon or even a lay person (no. 19).[29] Funerals as such do not form part of the sacerdotal liturgy. However, it is normal that the one responsible for the community fulfills the role of minister of the gospel and minister of consolation at this important moment (*Oe* 16 and 18).

While the predecessors of *Oe* directed prayers to God only on behalf of the dead, *Oe* introduces a new element: prayer for the living. Prayers express faith and hope that the dead arrive in God's house and reassure the living in their faith. Another novelty is the substitution of what was hitherto known as *absolutio* by a *valedictio* (*Oe* 6), a movement from a rite of purification of the dead to a true "farewell."

Oe 2 insists on the hope-life-resurrection theme. It offers the opportunity for churches everywhere to allow the funerary tradition to become a liturgical expression appropriate to their own people and rooted in their own cultures. It states that in celebrating funerals, the impression should not be given of either disregard or contempt for the attitudes and practices of one's own time and place (*Oe* 2).

Oe 3, 26, and 32 expect that these special moments, including the vigil at the home of the deceased, the laying out of the body, and the carrying of the body to the place of burial, will depend on local customs. These were prepared taking into account conditions in various parts of the world. *Oe* 15 adds that the funeral rites granted to those who have chosen cremation may be celebrated according to the model in use in the region. In the end, it is clearly stated that in the future, particular rituals can be prepared and that bishops' conferences have this responsibility (Cf. *Oe* 8, 9, and 21). This offers a clear opportunity for inculturation.[30]

IV. TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF THE ROMAN FUNERAL LITURGY

1. *God, the God of the Living*

When one of her children dies, the Church celebrates God who is God of the living, as the ancient Roman prayer of Christian funeral invites

[29] J-L. Anguè, "La présidence des funérailles par des laïcs," *MD* 182 (1990) 47–64.
[30] J. Llopis, "El nuevo ritual de exequias," *Ph* 57 (1970) 275.

us to do: *Deus apud quem omnia morientia vivunt.* The prayer presupposes that all those who "die in the Lord" are alive with God. Death is understood in the perspective of the general resurrection referred to by St. Paul (1 Thess 4:13-14).

When one of its members dies, the Church finds consolation in God, who both reconciles and purifies, as the Roman euchology implores: . . . *tua pietate ablue indulgendo* (*Oe* 174); the antiphon *Tu iussisti* also appeals to the forgiving piety of God: *ne derelinquas me quia pius es* (procession to the church). Added to this is the praying of the penitential psalms;[31] of these, Psalm 50, which appeals to the mercy of God, is frequently used (*Oe* 35). At death God offers reconciliation (*Oe* 33; cf. nos. 168, 175).

God, the living God, sees to it that his people are reunited with him after death, to live in his house. This is referred to by various biblical images: paradise, the holy city of Jerusalem *(In paradisum),* the kingdom of God *(In regnum Dei),* and the "bosom of Abraham" *(Suscipiat).* Taken as a whole, death is seen as a passage to the abode of God, to a better living: *moriendo, mutantur in melius* (the ancient Roman prayer for the dead). The dead will be *in conspectu Altissimi* (*Subvenite;* Job 19:25-26), in the company of God's saints: *cum sanctis suis.* A voice from heaven even calls them "Blessed": *Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur* (*Audivi vocem;* also Rev 14:13).

2. *The Centrality of the Paschal Mystery*

For the contemporary theology of death, the death of Christ is the key for interpreting the death of a person in general and the faithful in particular. Rooted in the New Testament, it also goes back to the apostolic and most ancient authentic traditions of the Roman funeral liturgy.

By itself, death, linked with sin, ends in condemnation.[32] This penal nature of death is asserted by the New Testament (Luke 18:31-34; 24:25-27; Matt 26:52-54; cf. also Rom 5:12, 17-19, 20-21; 1 Cor 15:21). The new Ritual takes it up: *Oe* 167, 172, 175, 195. However, from the vantage point of Christ's paschal mystery, death has become the passage to the Father and the total victory over "death" itself. Through his death Jesus has transformed the sense of death from pure punish-

[31] Cf. A. Martimort, "Pastorale liturgie des malades," *QLP* (1955) 231–243, especially 241.

[32] G. Gozzelino, "Il nuovo rito delle esequie e la teologia contemporanea della morte," *RL* 58 (1971) 308–312, 318–320.

ment to true expiation and salvation,[33] rescuing humanity and delivering it from sin. In the same way, the faithful who die in imitation of Christ have their penal death transformed into "medicinal death" and become new creatures in Christ.

This newness of life is synonymous with redemption (Rom 8:23), which figuratively means liberation from sin through the death of Christ.[34] Christ's death, which necessarily brings new life to all, is linked in the rite of funerals to two fundamental sacraments: baptism and Eucharist.

An intimate relationship exists between the death of the Christian and baptism. The Christian is one who dies and walks in newness of life according to the divine initiative (Rom 8:29f.). Thus, it is the person redeemed through baptism whose death is celebrated by the Roman funeral liturgy. Christian death is the fulfillment of baptism, and the Eucharist is the guarantee of one's share in Christ's resurrection (*Oe* 10, 56, 183, 200; cf. also Rom 6:3-5).

This basic Christian faith is made evident when the Church sings the paschal psalms *In exitu* (*Oe* 30, 152) and *Confitemini* (*Oe* 70, 155) and announces the Lord's passion to the dying (*PH, O, LO, K*). This announcement is followed in *PH* or preceded in *O, LO, K* by communion in viaticum, the sacrament that promises the resurrection.

This fundamental insight has led to the choice of *Alleluia* chants (*Oe* 118–127) instead of the late medieval material like the *Dies irae*. Notwithstanding the pain and grief, a general tone of serenity and hope prevails in the new funeral ritual, and this is perhaps the most positive aspect of all. Insofar as death is a participation in the paschal mystery, it is part of Christ's mystery.

3. *The Theological Anthropology of Death*[35]

The beneficiary of this gracious action of God's call is *homo totus*. The word *anima*, therefore, must not be understood as a dichotomy

[33] Cf. A. G. Martimort: "Comment meurt un chrétien," *MD* 44 (1955) 6–13. Acts 2:36; Phil 2:9-11.

[34] On *redemptio* cf. A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Paris, 1954) 703, and M. P. Ellebracht, *Remarks on the Vocabulary of the Ancient Orations in the Missale Romanum* (Nijmegen, 1963) 52.

[35] Cf. R. Trocquer, "Anthropologie de l'âme et du corps devant la mort," *MD* 44, 49–57; P. Farnés, "Las Exequias segun el Ritual de Pablo VI," *Ph* 109 (1979) 49–58; Gozzelino, "Il nuovo rito delle esequie," 312–313; Th. Maertens and L. Heuschen, "Doctrine et pastorale de la liturgie de la mort" (i), 443–444.

between soul and body, but in the sense of the Greek ψυχή.[36] The entire human person who was the beneficiary of the baptismal experience is the same one who will benefit from God's summons at death.

This theological vision consists in giving back to death its specific human character. It asserts the primacy of the human person over everything that is not God, and it searches for new expressions to translate the faith content of death to forms understandable by contemporary people.

The *moment* of death is decisive for the realization of the human person. This vision is based on the belief that one's eternal destiny is intimacy with God brought about through death. If death defines the human person, then death must be in a supreme way an authentic human event with a truly human character of full consciousness and total liberty when the dying person can complete his or her own fundamental option. The prayers said *in persona defuncti*, the viaticum which the dying person receives, the presence of the family and the Church, and the great respect given to the body are but some of the powerful ways the funeral liturgy employs to emphasize death's human character.

4. *The Response of the Dead*

The ancient Church read into the "faith experience" of the dead and had them respond positively to the event of death.[37] This is seen in the antiphons, verses, and psalms used throughout the funeral liturgy *in persona defuncti,* as for example, *De terra formasti me, Tu iussisti nasci me,* and *Confitemini Domino*. They express the filial trust in and abandonment to God in love. In the antiphon *Vide, Domine, humilitatem meam et laborem meum, et dimitte omnia peccata mea*, the deceased is made to confess his or her sins and to beg God for the gift of paradise.

This response is meant to show that the dead person accepted death and prepared for it, conquering the fear of dying[38] and dying in sovereign liberty, aware of what death was about: a means of union of the chosen ones with God (cf. Rom 8:19 and Rev 21:1-3).

[36] Cf. *Not* 69 (1972) 17.

[37] Here is a patristic example. At the moment of his death, Cyprian gives thanks to God: *sanguine tuo sancietur disciplina et his dictis decretum ex tabella recitavit: Thascium Cyprianum gladio animadverti placet. Cyprian episcopus dixit: DEO GRATIAS*. Cf. *Acta Cypriani* 5, CSEL III/3, ed. G. Hartel (Vienna, 1871), Prefatio 113.

[38] K. Kramer, *The Sacred Art of Dying: How World Religions Understand Death* (New York, 1988) 195.

On the other hand, texts that make the community pray for the dead register a change in perspective. When the dead are less prepared, they need the prayers of those about them, and there is a shift to the third person. An example is *De terra formasti eum* found in the composition with the antiphon *In regnum Dei deducant te (O)*.

5. *Death and the Participation of the Community*

An essential legacy that the Roman funeral tradition has left us is that death is not only very personal but also highly communitarian. The dying Christian is not alone: *Eum videris (O); Incipiunt canere (PH); Viderint eum (K).*[39] No one can face death by himself or herself, without essential help from others. Right from the deathbed up to the burial, the Christian is surrounded and accompanied by the Church on earth and is welcomed into paradise by the heavenly Church.

The Church rejoices when it is able to hand over one of its members to the community of the saints. This may not be expressed with the same intensity and solemnity at every death, but it is there nevertheless. The antiphon *In paradisum* (*Oe* 69), which accompanies the procession to the burial place, more than being an intercessory invocation of the saints is a triumphant convocation.[40]

The hour of death is the occasion for the Christian community to gather, not around the dead but the dying. This community strongly appeals to the heavenly Church without interruption to come to meet the dead in a joyous procession, to introduce him or her into the heavenly Jerusalem (*Oe* 47, 50).

In this introduction into the kingdom of God, the angels, the saints, but especially the martyrs, play a particular role, as the Roman prayer for the dead reveals: . . . *suscipe iubeas animam famuli tui illius per manus sanctorum angelorum deducendam in sinu amici tui patriarchae Abrahae* (*GeV* XCI, no. 1627; see also the *Suscipiat* and the *Chorus angelorum*). The motif of the angels as those who guide the righteous after death takes its inspiration from Luke 16:22, where Lazarus is said to be carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. The saints of God, especially the martyrs, are charged with organizing the triumphal *adventus* into heaven *(Subvenite, In paradisum)*.

[39] Th. Maertens and L. Heuschen, "Doctrine et pastorale de la liturgie de la mort," *Paroisse et liturgie* 6 (1956) 444–445.

[40] E. Lodi, "I grandi temi teologici del rito dei funerali," *RPL* 6 (1968) 290.

A common element of the ancient Roman funeral liturgy is its aspect of sociability. In the procession the deceased was accompanied by parents, members of the family, friends, the clergy, and the poor.[41] At no time in a person's life is one so sociable as at his or her death. Every death thus affects the community as a whole.

Unlike its immediate predecessors, which were basically "clerical" in character, *Oe* assumes the active participation of the whole community (*Oe* 16): relatives and friends, funeral directors, and also the priest. All of them are involved in the preparation and celebration of the funeral rites—the vigil for the deceased, the funeral liturgy, and the rite of committal. Active participation implies more than mere presence at the wake and funeral Mass.[42]

The dead person is prayed for *sine intermissione (PH, O, K),* thus emphasizing the ever-presence of God and the ever-present accompaniment of the Christian community. The Roman funeral liturgy recommends intercessory prayers also for the bereaved relatives. This makes the funeral liturgy also one of consolation for the living who are anguished as a result of death. This new element was initiated by the Roman funeral ritual after Vatican II (*Oe* 183, 225–226).[43]

To conclude, death is at one and the same time a personal as well as an ecclesial mystery: the Christian ought to respond voluntarily to death's call and to say with Christ,"*Commendo spiritum meum."* However, the Christian ought also to wait for the Church's *Proficiscere anima christiana* and *Commendamus* (*Oe* 48, 192). In the early Church the care of the dying and the burial of the dead were still common responsibilities. Helping the dying person to accept the condition, later preparing the body for burial, bearing it to the burial site, and laying it in the grave–all these are necessary activities. Surrounding these actions with consoling prayers and meaningful rites made it clear that this last journey was symbolic of the more significant one: the Christian's homecoming to God. Insofar as it involves the entire Christian community, death is the Church's mystery.

[41] F. Arné, "Les images de la mort dans les livres d'heures," *MD* 145 (1981) 141; cf. G. Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 10–11.

[42] C. Oggioni, "Il nuovo rito dei funerali: le idee fondamentali, la struttura portante, lo spirito animatore," *RPL* 71 (1975) 3–12.

[43] Owusu, *The Roman Funeral Liturgy,* 178.

6. *Christian Death and the Sacraments of Initiation*

The Christian funeral finds its full meaning only in reference to the paschal mystery, just as each of the sacraments offers a ritualized participation in the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Roman funeral ritual presupposes a theology consonant with baptismal symbols. *GeG* and *RH* contain a commendation of the dying known by its opening words, *Proficiscere anima christiana de hoc mundo*.[44] The Church invokes the Triune God, the angels, and the saints at the hour of death, just as it had invoked them for the catechumens in the ancient rites of initiation.[45]

The commendation of the soul after the last breath almost always included the chant of Psalm 113, *In exitu*, a reminder of the passage from Egypt through the Red Sea (a symbol of death) and of rebirth in the Promised Land (eternal life), which the deceased comes to possess. Exodus is a prototype of the baptismal bath and death. The *Proficiscere* stresses that in their death the dying are bringing their baptism to fulfillment.

The Roman funeral ritual also includes a certain number of gestures or rites that emphasize a reenactment of the baptismal rite. A lighted candle placed in the hands of, or next to, the dying person was reminiscent of the one given at baptism.[46] The profession of faith at the *commendatio animae* was often couched in similar baptismal terms.[47]

[44] *GeG* 486, no. 2892; *RH* 1330. For the study of the origin of the *Proficiscere*, cf. D. Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort*, 369f.

[45] For our comparisons with baptism we shall use the baptismal *Ordo* of *G*. Cf. C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 165. H. R. Philippeau reports that in the third century one finds, already in Latin, some passages of the prayer for the dying, *Libera, Domine, sicut liberasti . . .*, the baptismal cup of one Podgoritza ("Textes et rubriques des agenda mortuorum," 56).

[46] On the dying and the lighted candle, cf. *Coutumes anciennes du monastère de Cluny*. Cf. also Th. Maertens and L. Heuschen, "Doctrine et pastorale de la liturgie de la mort" (1), 434; Philippeau, "Textes et rubriques des agenda mortuorum," 61, 63; and Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica*, 2:318. The giving of a candle to the neophyte made its appearance in the eleventh century (Ritual of Jumièges) at Rome in the twelfth century (Andrieu, *PR* 1, 32, 28). It reached back to a traditional imitational symbolism, namely, that the kingdom of God is likened to a marriage feast in which those who take part must have lighted lamps in their hands (Matt 25). The theme of light appears also in *G* 91, no. 1617; 93, no. 1634.

[47] Compare the *interrogatio ad penitentem* in Lambot, *Ordo infirmorum vel mortuorum du XI^e siècle*, with the *interrogatio de Symbolo Fidei* at baptism in *GeV* 43, nos. 449–454.

One of the euchological intercessory prayers from the medieval funeral rites refers to "the indelible seal which marks the dead" (*GrS* 1401).

In the Roman funeral ritual there are texts that present death in terms of washing reminiscent of the baptismal bath. We find this in the Roman prayer for the dead: *Deus, apud quem omnia morentia vivunt . . .; et si quid de regione mortali tibi contrarium contraxit fallente diabolo, tua pietate ablue indulgendo*. The washing of the dead recalls the baptismal washing that initiated the regeneration of the Christian, reinforcing the strong relationship between baptism and death. The sprinkling of holy water during the funeral celebration is a reminder of this regeneration through baptism.

The rite of dressing the dead also has its parallel in the sacrament of baptism. *PH* speaks of the dressing of the body in simple terms: . . . *induunt vestimenta,* while the Old Gelasian Sacramentary also speaks in terms that point to the rite of dressing: *Suscipe Domine animam servi tui ille revertentem ad te; vestem caelestem indui eam et lava eam sanctum fontem vitae aeternae . . . et inter lavantes stolas in fonte luminis vestem lavet* (*GeV* XCI, no. 1611; see also *GrS* 1407).

This prayer of the *GeV* brings out the similarity between the funeral and baptismal rites not only in its sentiment of culpability and the need for pardon but more especially in its description of heaven and the community of the blessed to which the deceased is brought, now clothed with a "heavenly dress"[48] and with the stole of immortality.

There is a close linkage of beginnings and endings that characterizes the Christian. While death is at the center of baptism, baptism is at the center of the funeral liturgy. Baptism is a dying; death, a rebirth. At death God promises resurrection and new beginnings.

However, it is unfortunate that *Oe* alludes to the sacraments of initiation timidly and almost totally omits the Holy Spirit, who vivifies and sanctifies the Christian's passage from this life to the next.

7. Death and the Eschatological Vision

Christianity has maintained that death is not simply the end of the human story,[49] giving rise to the doctrine of the immortality of the

[48] This liturgical dressing symbolizes the nuptial robe that is to be presented at the feast of the Lamb, without which one cannot enter the heavenly feast. Cf. Matthew 22:11-14: "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. . . ."

[49] "The Church affirms that a spiritual element survives and subsists after death, an element endowed with consciousness and will, so that the 'human self' sub-

soul. The ancient Church used Jesus' resurrection as ground for believing in our own resurrection (Acts 4:2). Christ is the cause of our resurrection, as the prayer accompanying the burial says: *qui reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae configuratum corpori claritatis suae* (*Oe* 55; Phil 3:20-21). He is both *victor mortis* and *Dominus vitae* (cf. *GeV* 458, *Oe* 34, Preface of Eucharistic Prayer IV). By his glorious resurrection he has inaugurated the ἔσχατον, the new and definitive reality of history. This eschatological era was begun at the moment that Christ made glorious the tomb into which he descended. Whenever a Christian enters the tomb in and with Christ, he or she recapitulates the eschatological orientation toward the resurrection.

Death, therefore, liberates (*Oe* 197). At death the body is reformed: *qui reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae* (*Oe* 55). A new order is inaugurated in which there is no more sorrow, no weeping or pain, but the fullness of peace and joy with Christ and the Holy Spirit (*Oe* 168). The Church's celebration of death becomes a truly complete eschatological feast when the Eucharistic sacrifice is offered, proclaiming the death of the Lord and transforming the just sentence of death into a "cup of blessing" (1 Cor 10:16).[50] The Eucharist prolongs the past and anticipates the future.

In paradisum (*Oe* 50), the great responsory that already in the fifth century accompanied the funeral procession to the cemetery, describes the paschal journey at death. The dead are not left alone on this journey: they are supported on the way and welcomed on arrival. This proclamation of the Communion of Saints is an important dimension of the funeral liturgy. It offers an authentic experience of the consoling truth of the Christian faith and makes it possible for the living to communicate, in Christ, with their dear ones taken away in death.

The concept of "paradise," both in its primitive biblical sense of earthly garden (Genesis 2; 3) and in its eschatological (Ezekiel 47) and heavenly (Rev 2:7) sense, is linked with that of "the holy city of Jerusalem" and with "the bosom of Abraham" (in *Suscipiat te Christus: Oe* 47;

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sists, though deprived for the present of the complement of its body. To designate this element, the Church uses the word 'soul,' the accepted term in the usage of Scripture and Tradition": J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, eds., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (London, 1992) 691–692. AAS 71 (1979) 939.

[50] E. Lodi, "I grandi temi teologici del rito dei funerali," *RPL* 6 (1968) 290.

Lazarus: Luke 16:22),[51] all of which are expressions for the abode of the blessed in the life beyond. These images paint so totally festive and glorious a picture as to transform all fear or pain into hope, even in the face of death. This "paradise" is a place of Christ's peace (*Oe* 55), of light (*Oe* 71, 169), and of eternal rest (*Oe* 66).

The biblical notion of "rest" *(Requiem aeternam)* recalls the sabbatical rest of the Creator (Gen 2:2-3) and the rest of God after liberating his people from slavery (Deut 5:12-15). We speak, therefore, of entry into freedom, of the end to sin and misery, of the rest offered by God to humankind beyond the ferial days (Heb 4:8-9). Christ affirms that he will give rest to our souls (Matt 11:29). Certainly, the intent of Christ's words "Leave the dead to bury their dead" (Matt 8:22) is to help us avoid the temptation of being preoccupied with the fate of the dead.

From the antiphon *In paradisum* we conclude that, for the ancient Church, the journey of the person toward eternity had two stages: the first, the leading of the soul into paradise by the angels *(In paradisum deducant te angeli),* and the second, the introduction of that soul into the heavenly Jerusalem by the martyrs *(suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem).*

8. *Death and the Holy Spirit*

The introduction to the new *Rite of Funerals* stresses that the bodies of the deceased faithful were temples of the Holy Spirit and must be honored as such (*Oe* 3, 10). Sprinkling with holy water and incensation are considered ways to honor the deceased.

However, one would have hoped to find a more important role assigned to the vivifying and sanctifying Spirit at the time when mortality gives way to immortality and when all life is renewed. The almost total absence of any specific references to the Holy Spirit, except for those in *Oe* 168 and 198, is a major omission in *Oe.* Any new edition of the Ritual would have to make adjustments for this unfortunate lacuna.

In *Oe* 168 we find a specific reference to the Holy Spirit in the prayer for the deceased in the home. The other specific reference to the Holy Spirit is found in one of the concluding prayers at the cemetery (*Oe* 198).

[51] On the admission of the soul into the bosom of Abraham and into paradise, cf., J. Ntedika, *L'évocation de l'au-delà,* 136–226.

Though the Spirit is mentioned, it is on behalf of the living and not the dead. It can serve to remind us that the journey to the life beyond requires a preparation in this life and that in this preparation we are aided by the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

The Roman funeral ritual offers us abundant and extraordinarily rich theological material for reflection. The doctrinal themes of the Roman funeral liturgy bring out the profound meaning of the mystery of Christian death. They present death as a positive liberation of the paschal type. A Christian's death is likened to the death of Jesus himself, being a passage to the resurrection. For believers death is a participation in the paschal mystery, and the very thought of this participation gives meaning and hope to the sorrow that accompanies death. For Christians, then, death is not the final event in the life of a person; it is the *dies natalis*.

Death is a passing from one state, condition, or stage to another, a transition in which the angels and saints play a major role. And since death is a passing over from one form of life to another, Christian death presupposes life in Christ, sustained by pardon and reconciliation with God, aided by the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, a life lived in communion with the saints and accompanied by the prayers of the whole Church.

Through a precise ritualization death is presented as a return of a creature to its Creator. Its profound nature elevates it onto a sacramental plane. In other words, death is portrayed as the offering of the self to God by the deceased himself or herself and by the Christian community. Death is a "going home," which, in our theological understanding, means a "coming back" to our Father's home.

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C. Liturgical Blessings

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20

Blessings in the East

The blessing, in its original meaning of praise of God, has its loftiest and most complete expression in the Eucharistic anaphora, and especially in that of the Antiochene tradition. The Father is blessed and thanked for creation and for the redemption brought about by the Son in his death and resurrection; he sends the Spirit who blesses the Eucharistic gifts so that these may transform sharers in them into an ecclesial body. The "Eucharistic blessing" thus represents and at the same time continually actualizes the work of salvation; for this reason it is the paradigm and model of every blessing.

But as early as the end of the fourth century we find, alongside the anaphora and within the Eucharistic celebration itself, other types of blessings; these, named *missae,* are part of the dismissals of various categories of persons—catechumens, penitents, and faithful—at the end of the Liturgy of the Word, but also immediately before communion.[1] Another development in the history of the Eucharistic liturgy: the Byzantine liturgy, which alone is under consideration here, witnessed an important transformation when liturgical greetings such as "Peace to all" (comparable to the Western *Dominus vobiscum*) changed from wishes to blessings accompanied by the sign of the cross; this happened at least from the eighth century on.[2] Furthermore, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the Eucharistic celebration acquired a "final blessing."[3]

[1] R. Taft, "The Inclination Prayer Before Communion in the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: A Study in Comparative Liturgy," *EO* 3 (1986) 29–60.

[2] S. Parenti, "La Preghiera della Cattedra nelle edizioni romane dell'eucologio greco (1754/1873)," *Oriente Cristiano* 28 (July–December, 1988) 49–59.

[3] For example, in the Italo-Byzantine euchologion *Vaticano gr.* 1554 (XI–XII sec.), f. 22r.

1. *Ritual Language and Forms of Celebration*

The vocabulary of prayer uses mainly the terms "sanctification" (ἁγιασμός) and "blessing" (εὐλογία), derived respectively from the verbs "to sanctify" (ἁγιάζω) and "to bless" (εὐλογέω), which are in fact used as synonyms as early as the *Barberini* euchologion. "Sanctify" can refer concretely to a person, whether in general terms[4] or in a more specific way as in the conferral of a ministry.[5] It is also used in the rite for the dedication of a church as well as at the occupation of an ordinary home or in invoking the divine blessing on natural elements.[6] The verb "bless" is used rather with reference especially to persons; it appears, for example, in the final inclination prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours and on other occasions,[7] although examples are not lacking in connection with elements of nature.[8]

"Blessing" sometime also expresses the idea of "permission," as it also does in Western monasticism (the abbot's blessing). Thus the request "Give your blessing, Sir" (εὐλόγησον δέσποτα) that occurs at the beginning of various celebrations (Eucharistic liturgy, Liturgy of the Hours, sacraments) means "Do you allow me?" and the celebrant grants his permission in the form of a blessing ("Blessed be our God . . ." or "Blessed be the Majesty of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit").[9] Today, a similar blessing from Romans 9:5 ends Vespers and Matins.[10] Every liturgical action is thus begun and ended with a blessing.

The ancient Byzantine euchologia, like the ancient Roman sacramentaries, reproduce a number of prayers in a row, one after the other, while saying nothing of the celebratory setting in which they are to be placed and which today varies from place to place. In the Church of Russia the setting is supplied by the *Moleben*, or Office of Supplica-

[4] For example, *BAR* 6.2; 19.4; 46.2; 91.2; 101.2; 225.

[5] For example, *BAR* 166.3.

[6] For example, *BAR* 123.5; 128.1; 231.2; 229.2; 238.3.

[7] For example, *BAR* 69.3; 84.2; 91.2; 101.2; 111.2; 183.2; 184.2; 185.2; 188.2; 189.2; 208.2; 209.2; 272.2.

[8] For example, *BAR* 122.2; 131.1; 151.2; 177.3; etc.

[9] G. Passarelli, "Osservationi liturgiche," *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, n.s. 33 (1979) 75–85.

[10] Romans 9:5 seems a more fitting reference for a Christian revival of the "blessing of the Name," as claimed by M. Arranz, "Une traduction du tétragramme divin dans quelques textes liturgiques slaves," in *Homo imago et amicus Dei: Miscellanea in honorem Joannis Golub*, ed. R. Peric, Collectanea Croatico-Hieronymiana de Urbe 4 (Rome, 1991) 497–504, esp. 503–504.

tion,[11] addressed to the Lord, to the Theotokos, or to a saint, in which the final prayer gives the reason for the celebration on each occasion (opening of premises, etc.). In the Church of Greece, on the other hand, the setting of the celebration is expressed in the minor rite of the blessing of water, inasmuch as the prayer specific to that rite usually explains the gesture of the sprinkling of persons, places, or objects, a gesture today regarded as central.

2. *Blessings Reserved to the Bishop*

In the Byzantine rite, as in the Roman, some blessings are reserved to the bishop and can be called "consecrations." There are only two of these: the preparation of the sacred μύρον (chrism) and the dedication of a church; the latter, however, can, under certain conditions, be delegated to a presbyter. The consecration of ἀντιμίνσια, or portable altars of cloth, which is also in the bishop's competence, was originally connected with the consecration of an altar but today is celebrated independently.[12] As is well known, Byzantine practice differs from the Roman in that the oils for the prebaptismal anointing and the anointing of the sick are blessed each time in the administration of the respective sacraments.

a) Consecration of the Sacred Μύρον

The μύρον or chrism used in the Byzantine rite for the postbaptismal anointing and in the consecration of a church is a strongly aromatic substance obtained from heating together oil and perfumes (twelve of the latter according to the *Barberini* euchologion), the perfumes being added to the oil in two successive heatings.[13] The same euchologion locates the "prayer or confection (ποίησις) of the μύρον" at the end of the anaphora of the evening Eucharistic liturgy on Holy Thursday, and it reserves the rite specifically to the bishop.[14] In the posticonoclastic period the preparation of the μύρον was reserved to the

[11] This is a variant, now removed from its context, of the ancient cathedral vigil that was the broad inspiration for monastic Matins, which derives many of its elements (psalms, gospel, hymnography) from the vigil; see M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales de la 'Pannychis' de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin et la 'Panikhida' des défunts," I–II, *OCP* 40 (1974) 314–343; 41 (1975) 119–139.

[12] J. Izzo, *The Antimension in the Liturgical and Canonical Tradition of the Byzantine and Latin Churches* (Rome, 1975).

[13] *BAR* 140.

[14] *BAR* 141.

patriarch of Constantinople and, later on, to the heads of the other patriarchates.[15]

There are two prayers. The first focuses entirely on the connection between the μύρον and Christian initiation; the second, a prayer of inclination (κεφαλοκλισία) recalls that "μύρον poured out" (Cant 1:3) is the very name of Christ the Messiah.[16] Over time the rite has become complex and the ingredients required are now more than fifty. In 1912 the see of Constantinople made the debatable decision to replace the first prayer with a late Cypriot text of the sixteenth century and to remove from the second the reference to Christ.[17]

b) Consecration and Dedication of a Church

According to the *Barberini* euchologion and other specimens of pre-iconoclastic tradition, the consecration (καθιέρωσις) of a church and an altar takes place behind closed doors on the day before the dedication (ἐγκαίνια). After reciting an introductory prayer, the patriarch washes with water the table and the columns that support it; he then purifies the table with perfumed oil, anoints it with μύρον, spreads the altarcloth on it, and incenses it and, after it, the entire church. Meanwhile, a second bishop anoints the pillars of the church with μύρον in the form of a cross. Two prayers conclude the rite of consecration.[18]

The next morning the patriarch goes to a church that is near the newly consecrated one and where Vespers and the vigil were celebrated the previous evening. He then goes in procession to the new church, which he enters in solemn form with all the people as Psalm 23:7 (LXX) is being sung. He next puts in place the relics, which are the real focus of this second rite and to which the three prayers making up the rite refer. The rite continues, and ends, with the celebration of the first Eucharist.[19]

In the posticonoclastic ritual provided in codex *Paris Coislin* 213 (Constantinople, 1027), the preparation of the relics already takes on a

[15] E. Velkovska, "Lo studio dei lezionari bizantini," *EO* 13 (1996) 268.

[16] M. Arranz, "Les sacrements de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain. 10. La consécration du Saint-Myron," *OCP* 55 (1989) 317–338.

[17] P. Menebisoglou, Τὸ ἅγιον Μύρον ἐν τῇ Ὀρθοδόξῳ Ἀνατολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἰδία κατὰ τὰς πηγὰς καὶ τὴν πράξιν τῶν νεωτέρων χρόνων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, Analekta Blatadôn 14 (Thessalonica, 1972) 107, 243, 235.

[18] *BAR* 150–153.

[19] *BAR* 154–156. V. Ruggieri, "Consacrazione e dedicazione di chiesa, secondo il Barberinianus graecus 336," *OCP* 54 (1988) 79–118.

greater importance in the first rite. The description becomes detailed and rubrical; personal prayers ("apologies") of the celebrant make their appearance, and the way is opened for possibly celebrating the two liturgical actions in a row.[20] It is this rite, with further additions, that has become current practice.

3. Blessings Connected with the Liturgical Year

In manuscript euchologia that can be assigned to centuries VIII–XII, there are few blessings proper to specific feasts of the liturgical year; in many manuscripts there is only the blessing of water, the ἁγιάσμος par excellence, on the feast of the Theophany (January 6), which, as everyone knows, is connected with the commemoration of the Lord's baptism.[21] When possible, this rite takes place outside the church, near the liturgical font or a public fountain or even on the shore of a river or a lake, and it shows euchological differences in the Greek and Slavic recensions. In addition to the ἁγιάσμος of January 6, there is a "minor" blessing celebrated in monasteries on the first day of each month and every time there is need for blessed water.[22]

The blessing of palms on Palm Sunday is Eastern in origin. In the usage of the cathedral of Constantinople, the traditional procession proper to this day was known and celebrated, but nothing was said of a blessing of the branches.[23] On the other hand, such a blessing is well attested on the periphery of the Byzantine world, due to the influence of the Jerusalem tradition.[24] Always, and only, in the euchologia of that area do the ancient prayers for the blessing of cheese, eggs, and the Easter lamb appear.[25]

[20] *Coislin* 213. *Euchologe de la Grande Eglise,* ed. J. Duncan (Rome, 1983) 10–25; commentary in V. Ruggieri and K. Duramani, "Tempio e Mensa," *Rassegna di Teologia* 3 (1991) 279–300.

[21] For the history and the manuscript tradition see E. Velkovska, "Un passo della *Mystica Theologia* dello Pseudo-Dionigi Areopagita nell'Eucologio Slavo del Sinai," and "Il rito della Teofania in uno Schematologhion slavo del XIV secolo," in idem, *Nuovi paralleli graeci dell'eucologio slavo del Sinai* (Rome, 1996) 17–30 and 31-54.

[22] I. Phountoules, Ἀκολουθία τοῦ μικροῦ ἁγιασμοῦ, Κείμενα Λειτουργικῆς 11 (Thessalonica, 1978).

[23] J. Mateos, *Le Typikon de la Grande Eglise. Ms. Sainte-Croix Nº.* 40, I, OCA 165 (Rome, 1962) 66.

[24] E. Velkovska, "Un eucologio del monastero di Grottaferrata," in *Miscellanea di studi in onore di P. Marco Petta per il LXX compleanno,* IV (= *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata,* n.s. 44 [1992] 364–365).

[25] Ibid., 365–367.

On the Saturdays of Lent and before Pentecost, days that the Byzantine calendar assigns to the commemoration of the deceased, there is the blessing of the κόλλυβα, loaves of boiled grain that the fifth-century monks used to eat during the first week of Lent; these were then changed into cakes, still grain-based, that were distributed at the end of rites commemorating the deceased or eaten in honor of the saints. The symbolism of the grain of wheat in John 12:24 was evidently at work here. The blessing of the κόλλυβα for the commemoration of St. Theodore the Recluse, which falls on the first Saturday of Lent, is especially solemn.[26]

4. *Blessings for Various Occasions*

The euchologia have preserved for us numerous formulas for blessings of persons or objects. The collection is a heterogeneous one as far as provenance, composition, and literary style are concerned, and there is no dearth of borrowings from very ancient texts such as the *Apostolic Tradition*[27] and from apocryphal, if not legendary, sources.[28] As a result, the literary genre of the prayers is also somewhat varied. Some formulas follow the model of the anaphora, that is, they start with a biblical anamnesis that gives reasons for God's intervention here and now in connection, for example, with some material boon, with or without an explicit request for a blessing and in the perspective of sharing the eschatological bounty as well;[29] they follow an embolist dynamic.[30] But the structure is not always so linear. Sometimes the request made in the prayer turns into contingent petitions,[31] or the mediation of the minister is given too prominent a place.[32] Yet a sense

[26] See the entry "Kollyba," by R. F. Taft and A. P. Kazhdan in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium,* ed. A. P. Kazhdan and A. M. Talbot, 3 vols. (New York–Oxford, 1991) 2:1137–1138.

[27] B. Botte, ed., *La Tradition apostolique de saint Hippolyte. Essai de reconstitution,* LQF 39 (Münster in W., 1972[4]); G. Mercati, *Una preghiera antichissima degli eucologi medievali: Alcuni scritti e brevi saggi di studi sulla Volgata pubblicati in occasione del cinquantenario monastico di Sua Eminenza il Cardinale Gasquet* (Rome, 1917) 69–75 [= idem, *Opere Minori* IV, ST 79 (Vatican City, 1939) 7–15].

[28] For example, *BAR* 212.2.

[29] For example, *BAR* 182.2; 190.2; 192.2; 216.2.

[30] C. Giraudo, "Le récit de l'institution dans la prière eucharistique a-t-il des antécédents? Quelques aperçus sur la prière liturgique et la dynamique de son embolisme." *NRT* 106 (1984) 513–536, esp. 526–527.

[31] For example, *BAR* 192; 193.2; 194.2; 219.2.

[32] For example, *BAR* 208.2; 210.2.

of balance is maintained. The repertory of prayers naturally reflects the concerns of the social setting, primarily agricultural, in which the prayers arose and which they had in mind.

A characteristically Byzantine blessing is the "apomyrism" (ἀπομυρίζω), which consists in anointing a certain kind of relics, as a way of acknowledging ("new") saints as the equals of the ancient martyrs.[33] A derivative of this is the mingling of liquids on the relics, with thaumaturgical effects in those who drink of the fluid; or, in my view, it consists in placing relics or a sacred object in contact with a liquid in order to sanctify it.

As for the blessing of icons, the rite in use today is a late one and comes from a manuscript tradition that reflects usages proper to the island of Cyprus, which were in turn borrowed from the Middle East.[34] No less peripheral and late are the blessings of sacred vessels.[35]

5. Some Considerations

Today, blessings still play a preponderant part in the liturgical life of the Byzantine Churches. The hebdomadary of a parish is occupied for a good part of the day with the celebration of offices for persons or small groups, and these offices almost always include a blessing. There are rites for the deceased with a blessing of the κόλλυβα, rites of intercession with a blessing of votive loaves, the blessing of water, blessings of icons, apotropaic anointings, offerings of gifts and animals to the church. Then, too, the complex of rites connected with the Christian initiation of infants, such as the presentation of the mother and the child on the fortieth day after its birth, are understood not only by the faithful but also by the clergy as true and proper "blessings" because of the frequent repetition of the sign of the cross by the celebrant every time the word "bless" occurs in the text.

As a result, the meaning of the blessing is in fact twisted into a kind of magico-ritual consecration. The use of a language no longer

[33] This is the thought-provoking interpretation given by V. Ruggieri, 'Απομυρίζω (μυρίζω), ovvero la genesi di un rito," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 43 (1993) 21–35.

[34] U. Zanetti, "Bohairic Liturgical Manuscripts," *OCP* 61 (1995) 84 (with earlier bibliography), rightly suggests a Jerusalemite ancestry; P. Menevisoglou, "'Η εὐχή ἐπὶ ἱστορηθείσαν καινὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Μ. Εὐχολογίου καὶ ἡ χρῖσις τῶν νέωνεἰκόνων δι ' ἁγίου μύρου," Κληρονομία 25 (1993; appeared in 1995) 17–31.

[35] G. I. Passarelli, "Sulla benedizione dei vasi sacri," *Euntes Docete* 32 (1979) 297.

understood, or poorly understood, by the faithful (ancient Greek or ecclesiastical Slavic) renders the problem more acute (where it exists), despite the fact that the prayers used ordinarily express a simple and correct theology of blessings. To this it must be added that prayers are almost entirely lacking that correspond to the needs of contemporary society, needs quite different from those of the Byzantine Middle Ages, of which the present-day euchologion still provides abundant examples.

Some of the blessings, especially of loaves and of the κόλλυβα in honor of the saints or in intercession for the dead, are performed at the end, like an appendix, of the Sunday and feastday Eucharistic liturgy. That which has been blessed is eaten in church. This action constitutes the moment of direct participation and involvement of the faithful in the liturgical action, the reason being that Eucharistic communion is on the whole something very rare not only among the laity but even among monks and priests themselves when they do not have a part in the service for the week.

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21

Blessings in Rome and the Non-Roman West

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON TERMINOLOGY

The Latin word *benedicere* (literally, "speak good of"), like the Greek εὐλογεῖν and the Hebrew *brk,* can be used in reference either to God or to an object. In order to do the same, many modern languages require two expressions (e.g., English: "praise" and "bless"; German: "preisen" and "segnen"). The praise *(benedictio)* of creatures is directed to God, who is thereby acknowledged as the Lord and source of all blessing *(benedictio)*. The concept "blessings" thus expresses both components of a liturgical action: praise of God and God's blessing.

Until the Code of Canon Law of 1983, Latin juridical language distinguished between *benedictiones constitutivae* and *benedictiones invocativae* (see 1917 Code, can. 1148 § 2). In the new Latin liturgical books the terms *benedictio* and *benedicere* are usually used. The only distinction made is between *dedicatio* and *benedictio* for a church and an altar, depending on whether there is question of a church or chapel built to be permanent or a place to be used only transitionally for divine worship, and on whether the altar is fixed or portable. In this connection the word *consecratio* is no longer used.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF BLESSINGS

1. *Blessings as Praise and Prayers for Blessing*

Basic to an understanding of blessings is the recognition that they are not superstitious (and therefore fundamentally unbelieving) magical attempts to get God to act on events in the world. Every blessing is, first of all, thankful praise of God, the origin and giver of every blessing. The purpose of blessings is ultimately "to give worship to God"

(*SC* 59). Blessings of human beings and things are, in the final analysis, laudatory invocations of God upon them; they are anamneses or remembrances: the Church gratefully remembers the fact that human beings and things are already blessed by creation and redemption, and it thanks God for this.

All this by no means excludes a salvific element. Blessings are meant to make it possible to experience God's blessing in a sensible way. God bestows this blessing continuously by conserving in existence the world he has created. His blessing consists in his being-with this world, in remaining with it and continuing his care of it. God bestows the fullness of his blessing through the paschal mystery of his incarnate Son. God's blessing consists in the continuous application of the salvation effected by Jesus through his death and resurrection. When the Church undertakes blessings, it asks God to enable it to experience his kindness and good will, his blessing that is bestowed through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Blessings are meant to effect the personal salvation of the individual person and to contribute to the building up of the Body of Christ (see *SC* 59).

In the bestowal of blessings, then, there are two elements; praise of God and petition for the application of salvation to human beings. They are also bestowed with a view to everyday life in which men and women are to communicate the love of God they have received through blessings and thereby continue the praise of God that found expression in those blessings: blessings "confer grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace to their profit, to worship God duly, and to practice charity" (*SC* 59).

2. *Blessings as Signs*

It is due to their character as signs that blessings, like the sacraments, help human beings to receive grace fruitfully, worship God, and love their neighbors. The wealth of the Church's sacramental manifestations of life becomes recognizable in the fact that not only do the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord exercise their sanctifying power in the Eucharist and in the other sacraments offered to human beings at decisive moments of their lives. In addition, through an abundance of sign actions, that is, the blessings, "almost every event of their lives" is sanctified "with the divine grace which flows from the paschal mystery," so that "there is scarcely any proper use of

material things which cannot thus be directed toward the sanctification of people and the praise of God" (*SC* 61).

Blessings thus make it clear that earthly reality—the concrete situations of human life, and material things—is connected with the paschal mystery of Christ. This mystery is the source of divine blessing on everything that exists.

The proper interpretation of blessings presupposes that the world is understood as a good creation: "Everything created by God is good" (1 Tim 4:4; see Gen 1:31). The created world, then, even insofar as it has been formed by human beings in accordance with the commission of the Creator (Gen 1:28), and therefore both in natural realities and in things produced by human beings in accordance with the will of God, is a revelation of the good God, a gift, a present from his love, a place of his presence and nearness. This revelation, this gift, has found its supreme expression in the incarnation of God.

But through their faith human beings also know that the entire creation is, at the same time, drawn into the "mystery of iniquity," so that sin, suffering, and death rule and the whole creation "has been groaning in labor pains until now"; it must still "be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:21-22). The image of labor pangs is intended to show that wickedness and sin will not last forever. The victory over evil has already been won with the death and resurrection of Jesus, the world has been sanctified, and the new creation has begun. The risen body of the Lord guarantees the future glorification of the entire creation.

It is the Church's intention to provide insight into these graced events of salvation history by means of blessings: "Because they are signs they also instruct" (*SC* 59). As signs that remind us, they are to make perceptible the blessing given in creation and redemption; as signs that promise, they point ahead to the consummation of the new creation in the eternity of God.

Blessings are uttered upon human beings and material things. Human beings who receive blessings are to experience thereby the fact that they have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and are sustained by God's ever-present goodness. Through the sanctifying action of blessings, material things, both those that are natural and those that are the product of human work, are interpreted for human beings in their connection with the saving event of creation and redemption.

The closer material things are to human beings and the more they can contribute to their well-being or become a threat to them, the more appropriate it is to emphasize their human importance through blessings. Things do not thereby undergo any change in their nature; rather their nature is more deeply understood and better acknowledged, namely, that they have their origin in the blessing given by the Creator and are meant to be pointers to the new blessing that redemption has brought to the world. In this way, the concrete reality in which human beings live becomes transparent to the realities of salvation.

In blessings, therefore, there is no question of separating parts of earthly reality from their original setting, of "sacramentalizing" them; rather, the love and care of God for the whole of creation are attested for concrete situations, and it is made clear to human beings that material things can be of help to their salvation.

Finally, all blessings are intended ultimately for human beings and are given for their sake. Blessings are to help them know the might of the Creator and the love of the Redeemer, to acknowledge these through thanksgiving and praise, and to ask God for his further help.

3. *Blessings as Celebrations of Believers*

Blessings have in common with the sacraments that they are signs of salvation, visible signs of invisible grace, and therefore also signs expressing faith. The faith of human beings in the power of God and in the salvation wrought through Christ in the Holy Spirit is an indispensable condition for a meaningful and fruitful celebration of blessings. Only to believers do the blessings of the Church bear witness that the world has been blessed. Only believers who trust in God and hope in the redemptive power of Christ accept the intercession of the Church and are prepared to experience God's blessing through the blessings of the Church (see *SC* 61).

Only where faith is alive do blessings have meaning and importance. On the other hand, where faith is lacking and the meaning of Christian intercessory prayer is not understood and its justification not recognized, the celebration of blessings is worthless; where people expect blessings to work automatically, the reproach of superstition and magic is justified.

In addition, it is true of blessings, as of the sacraments, that "they not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish,

strengthen, and express it" (*SC* 59). The celebration of blessings, too, has an influence on faith: as signs of faith, blessings awaken and deepen faith, unite believers more closely to God, and enable the believing community (family, parish) to experience their union in faith. Blessings connected with the celebration of the sacraments (e.g., the blessing of water at baptism) or on certain days of the year (e.g., candles on Candlemas) are especially important because they lead into central celebrations of the faith or interpret these and make them fruitful for the lives of the faithful.

Because the Church as a whole is a believing Church, it is also a blessed Church and vehicle of the divine blessing that the risen Lord has bestowed on her in the Holy Spirit. She acts, therefore, by order of the risen Lord and in the power of the Holy Spirit when she performs blessings. In these she gives praise and thanks to God. Moreover, like all the sacramentals, blessings have their effects "through the Church's intercession" (*SC* 60).

In the celebration of blessings, the praise and intercessory action of the Church are indispensable. For this reason, blessings are not performed as private actions of those members of the Church who are authorized to give them; they are always celebrated as liturgies, and by those for whom they are intended.

All Christians, by reason of their participation, through baptism and confirmation, in the common priesthood and their having been personally blessed, are called to bless in their own sphere of life, which is always also part of the Church. They are called, that is, to praise God for the salvation given them, to thank him for it, and, at the same time, to pray for his further care and his effective future protection. Therefore, lay persons, too, can give blessings in their own sphere of life (e.g., parents of a family).

When Christians bless, they are responding with thanks and praise to the constantly given blessing of God; from thanksgiving, moreover, there naturally flows prayer for the future application of that blessing. In all this, they are conscious that God is the only real giver of every blessing and that human blessings are always only a participation in the blessing that God gives through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. In reliance on a statement of the Council, in which it appeals to Augustine, we may say: Christ is present with his power in blessings so that whenever anyone blesses, Christ blesses (see *SC* 7).

III. HISTORY OF BLESSINGS

1. *Christian Antiquity*

a) Christians fulfilled the command of the Lord and the Apostle to pray constantly and not grow weary (see Luke 18:1; 1 Thess 5:17) by continuing the Jewish custom of praying at set times of the day. So too they met the need of praising God "continually" (Luke 24:53) by uttering thankful praise of God, or a blessing, on special occasions. They certainly did this first of all at meals, again following Jewish custom.

b) In the *Apostolic Tradition* (henceforth *AT*), which is ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome († 325), there are two blessings that are filled with thanksgiving to God for the blessing received from him. One is the blessing for the light, which the bishop pronounces when the lamps are brought into the dining room before the evening meal (25). The other is the blessing of first fruits, again by the bishop (31).

The two blessings in the *AT* are probably independent liturgical actions. In them the thanksgiving and praise that mark all of Christian life are voiced in a special way from time to time. Of course, Christian thanksgiving finds its supreme expression in the liturgy, which, being entirely a "thanksgiving," is called "Eucharist." It is understandable that since at least the third century the Church has linked other blessings with the gratitude and praise of the Eucharistic celebration, the Eucharistic Prayer. The *AT* mentions the blessing of milk, honey, and water at the baptismal Eucharist (21).[1]

The Eucharist, however, is not only the high point of Christian thanksgiving; since it renders present the death and resurrection of Jesus, it is also the source of all blessing for the Church. Therefore, the Eucharistic Prayer of the *AT* is already not simply one of thanksgiving and praise of the saving act that God has done in Jesus Christ; it is also a petition that the Spirit may come on the Church. Not without reason do the bishop and the presbytery make an epicletic gesture of blessing during the entire prayer: they extend their hands over the gifts (4). It is not surprising, then, that the texts which are suggested, immediately after the Eucharistic Prayer, for the blessing of oil and of cheese and olives (6) are not only prayers of thanksgiving but also contain petitions.

[1] The blessing of the oils needed for the anointings is mentioned in connection with the celebration of baptism that precedes the Eucharist (*AT* 21).

c) The Euchologion of Bishop Serapion of Thmuis († after 362), which appeared in Egypt somewhat more than a hundred years after the *AT,* contains blessings of persons (catechumens, lay persons, the sick) and objects (oil and water for the sick; water for baptism, with the oldest known formulary for this blessing; oil for the postbaptismal anointing; oil, bread, or water for the sick; see Funk, *DCA* 2, 162; 164; 166; 178–182; 186; 188; 190–192). All the blessings of objects follow the classical pattern: thankful praise, petition, doxology, but the element of petition is already much extended, the element of thanksgiving very reduced, and not infrequently the prayer sounds as if it were for a transformation of the objects.

2. *The Middle Ages*

a) Tendencies discernible in Serapion's euchologion in the East but also in the *AT* in the West—the expansion of the element of petition and the understanding of blessings as consecrations—played a decisive role in the Latin sacramentaries of the early Middle Ages.

A reason for this may have been the entirely understandable fact that people understood blessings in the light of the Eucharist. During this period many blessings were celebrated in connection with the Eucharist and indeed, in the area in which the Roman liturgy was used, even within the Eucharistic Prayer, before the concluding *Per quem haec omnia* and the final doxology, which ended these blessings. Now, when, as in the Roman Canon, thanksgiving found expression only briefly in the introductory Preface, and the Eucharistic Prayer had become a prayer of petition, it was natural that the blessings incorporated into the Canon often no longer had an element of thanksgiving, as in the distant past, but immediately, and often exclusively, continued the petitions of the Canon: "Bless, *Lord, these fruits as well . . .; Lord, we beseech you, send your Holy Spirit* (*GeV* 577; 582).

Occasionally, as in the blessing of the first beans in the Gelasian Sacramentary (*GeV* 577) and the blessing of the first grapes in the Gregorian Sacramentary (*GrH* 631), there is still an echo of the exhortation of Hippolytus in connection with the blessing of fruits: to thank God as we enjoy his gifts.

Finally, as the corresponding part of the Mass came to be no longer called "Eucharistic Prayer," and people were conscious only of the occurring "transformation," the opinion gradually took shape that whatever was "blessed" and "sanctified" after the great "consecration"

of bread and wine, which originated with Christ himself, had a share, as it were, in this supreme blessing and sanctification of earthly gifts, that is, it was likewise "consecrated" in some measure.

The early Church, too, was convinced that the celebration of the Eucharist had a kind of "consecratory" effect beyond the transformation of the elements of bread and wine. But it did not utter blessings proper over chalice and paten, altar and church building. Rather it maintained that the first Eucharist celebrated with or in these objects was also their blessing.[2] It was only at the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth that the first formularies for blessings proper of these objects appeared.[3]

b) At approximately this same time there was a strengthening of a tendency to purify persons and objects from the action of demons, something that had been noticeable in Hippolytus only in the use of the word *exorcizare*. In the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, for example, the blessings of water, salt, and the oil of exorcism either take the form of exorcisms or have exorcisms before the blessings proper (see *GeV* 288, 289, 389, 604, 607, 617, 1557, 1559, 1608). When an exorcism was spoken only over the oil of exorcism needed for the prebaptismal anointing and not over the oil of the sick and the chrism, we may infer that the exorcism was spoken with an eye on the catechumens who were to be anointed. For there was an explicit prayer that all the power of the evil enemy and all the wickedness of the devil might depart from the oil, which was created for the profit of human beings (see *GeV* 389). There was a similar exorcism over the water that was to be sprinkled as holy water in homes (see *GeV* 1557).

Here a pessimistic view of the world has won out over the biblical understanding of creation as good (see Gen 1; 1 Tim 4:4) and belonging in its entirety to the Lord (see Ps 24[23]:1). The knowledge that the fulfillment of creation was still in the future (see Rom 8:19-22) was stronger than the conviction originating in Christ that "nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom 14:14; see Acts 10:15). The idea that blessings must be used to snatch created things from the power of the evil one

[2] For chalice and paten, see Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* 113, 2, 6 (CCL 40, 1645); for churches and altars, Vigilius, *Ep. ad Profuturum* 4 (PL 84:832); Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 3, 30 (PL 77:288); *GeV* 703, 705, 712f.

[3] For altar, chalice, and paten: *GaF* 56–68; with the addition of a formulary for a church building: *GeV* 689–702.

and so purify them finds expression not only in exorcisms proper but also in the texts for numerous blessings, as when, for example, in a ninth-century blessing of a well, God is asked to remove from the water therein every onslaught of demonic enticement (see *GrH* 1461).

c) In the beginning, the few blessings of objects were closely connected with the celebration of the Eucharist, but at a later time blessings were administered, with increasing frequency, as independent liturgical celebrations. As a result, it was possible continually to increase their number and thus the variety of objects to be blessed. In addition to the many blessings of individual objects, there was, beginning in the late eighth century, a *Benedictio ad omnia quae volueris* (see *GrH* 1464). The idea that there was magic at work inevitably grew as soon as bishops and priests gave blessings privately, without any participation of the people. It was not least by the wealth of the formularies of blessing that the Latin pontificals and rituals of the Middle Ages gave evidence of the creativity of that period in liturgical history. In the process, due to the combining of elements of varied provenance, the major blessings, such as the dedication of a church, turned into extensive, overloaded ritual structures and collections of texts.[4]

3. *The Modern Age to Vatican II*

It is understandable that the Reformers were critical of blessings as practiced at this period. The post-Tridentine liturgical books brought a new organization of things, which admittedly did not rescue the liturgy from all the blind alleys of the medieval development, but did at least eliminate the worst abuses, especially by reducing the number of blessings. Unfortunately, in many blessings no value was seen in having a real celebration: what was important was not the community and its praise of God but the priest's power to bless and the object to be blessed.

In the *PR* of 1596 there were still thirty-one blessings in place of the forty-six in the *PGD*. In the revised editions of Part I (1962) and Part II (1961), which included many simplifications of individual blessings, texts that had been used for hundreds of years were indeed eliminated, but new formularies were also created (partly from old texts), so that in addition to four blessings of persons there were twenty-two

[4] See *Ordo ad benedicendam ecclesiam* in *PRG* I, 124–173.

of objects. In addition, there were the blessing of the holy oils and the Apostolic Blessing in the as yet unrevised Part III.[5]

In Title VIII *(De benedictionibus)* of the Roman Ritual there were still twenty-nine blessings; any priest might administer eighteen of these, but the other eleven were reserved to the bishop; another four blessings were to be found elsewhere in the Ritual. Exorcisms were provided only for the blessings of salt, water, and oil. The renewal of the Roman model admittedly did not mean a renewal also of the special rituals of dioceses. In the course of time, as needs arose, new formularies were added to the Roman Ritual in an appendix and in far greater numbers than the blessings contained in the body of the book: seventy of these were not reserved, seventy-nine were reserved; in addition, there were formularies for the nuptial blessing and baptismal water and (two) for altars. In the last preconciliar edition of the Ritual (1952), the body of the book and the appendix (minus a few texts) were combined under Title IX *(De benedictionibus)*.

The attempt by the post-Tridentine reform to limit the number of blessings succeeded only to a limited extent: only inchoatively in the Ritual, only in a very small measure in the *PR* of 1596.

4. *The Renewal Since Vatican II*

a) The necessity of a new understanding and renewed practice of blessings in the Latin Church was seen prior to Vatican II. Evidence of this is the new edition of the *PR* in 1962, the simplification of the blessing of new fire in the revised form of the Easter Vigil celebration (1951), and that of the blessing of palms when the new liturgy of Holy Week was introduced in 1956.

The fathers of the Council recognized that "with the passage of time . . . there have crept into the rites of the sacraments and sacramentals certain features that have rendered their nature and purpose far from clear to the people of today" and, consequently, that there was need of "some changes . . . to adapt them to present-day needs" (*SC* 62).[6] The

[5] Benedictions that were parts of other celebrations were not counted (e.g., "Gregorian water" in the consecration or reconciliation of a church).

[6] On March 29, 1962, in connection with the way in which the central preparatory commission for Vatican II dealt with the schema on the liturgy, Cardinal P.-E. Léger of Montreal criticized the fact that in a series of blessings of objects the celebrant prayed for the objects instead of for the persons who use them (which the Cardinal thought better); see *Acta et Documenta Series II* (Preparatoria) II/3, 298f.

first need, as far as blessings were concerned, was to make it evident that blessings too are liturgical celebrations. Therefore the revision of the sacramentals had to follow "the primary principle of enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily. The circumstances of our times must also be considered" (*SC* 79).

b) The juridical foundation for carrying out this mandate was laid when the vernacular was allowed in the celebration of the sacramentals and it became possible to work out special rituals based on the new Roman Ritual (see *SC* 63). With a view to these new rituals that were to be established and that were intended to meet "the needs of our time" in a particular local church, the addition of new sacramentals was explicitly allowed. Two important provisions of liturgical law had to do with the minister: there were to be reservations only to bishops and ordinaries, and then in the case of only a few blessings; and "provision should be made for the administration of some sacramentals, at least in special circumstances and at the discretion of the ordinary, by qualified lay persons" (*SC* 79). The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church teaches that it is the office of deacons "to administer sacramentals," which must refer first and foremost to blessings, since officiating at funeral and burial services is expressly mentioned (*LG* 29).[7]

All this made it possible for the postconciliar reform of blessings to move beyond the narrow bounds of medieval practice and, here again, to return to the "ancient and venerable norm of the Fathers." A first step in this direction was taken in the first Instruction on the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *(Inter Oecumenici)*. The regulation then in force, that only a single prayer be used in the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday and of the new fire during the Easter Vigil, was extended to the blessing of candles on Candlemas and the ashes on Ash Wednesday. In addition, it limited the reservation of the blessings provided in the Roman Ritual (see Instruction 76f.: *EDIL* 1, 274f.; *DOL,* no. 23, p. 105). Deacons were not given a general permission to administer the blessings of the earlier Ritual; the new books were to establish new laws.[8]

[7] See, too, the motu proprio *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem,* 22, 5 (trans. in *DOL,* no. 309, pp. 780–783).

[8] See the reply of the Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Decrees of Vatican II, in *AAS* 66 (1974) 667 (*DOL,* no. 320, p. 803). See the commentary in *Not* 11 (1974) 36–39; see also the Code of Canon Law of 1983, can. 1169 § 3.

The study groups of the Consilium that were responsible for the Pontifical and the Ritual did the actual work of renewal in the area of blessings. When the Consilium ceased to exist in April 1970, only the *Ordo benedicendi oleum catechumenorum et infirmorum et conficiendi chrisma* had been revised to the extent that it could be published shortly afterward. Since the other blessings in the *PR* had appeared in renewed form as recently as 1962, their further revision was regarded as not so imperative. This work continued over many years, until the *ODEA* was published in 1977 (see Volume V, 4a). The revised *Rituale Romanum: De Benedictionibus* was not published until 1984.

IV. THE CELEBRATION OF BLESSINGS

1. *Blessings of Objects as Parts of Other Celebrations*

A common trait of these blessings in the Missal and Ritual is that as a result of their placement within another liturgy, they are reduced to a minimum, that is, to the prayer of the presider.

a) Missal

Two groups can be distinguished:

The three blessings of the first group are comparable with one another inasmuch they are connected with an opening procession: the blessings of candles on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, of branches on Palm Sunday, and of fire during the Easter Vigil.[9] Consequently, in none of the texts suggested for the opening rite is anything said of the blessing, but only of the celebration that follows. If the benediction were omitted, the celebration would retain its meaning.

The blessings of the ashes on Ash Wednesday and of the water at the remembrance of baptism on Sundays may be regarded as forming a second group: both replace the general confession of sins that otherwise begins the celebration of Mass. The sprinkling with water and the imposition of ashes are basically intended to express the same idea in visible signs, even if with different emphases: a turning away from the wicked one and a turning to God, motivated in the one case by a recall of the meaning of baptism and in the other by the conviction that an authentic conversion requires repentance in attitude and action. These thoughts must be expressed before the sprinkling and

[9] The processions with palms and candles, along with the blessings that precede them, may take place only as introductions to the following celebration of Mass: *EDIL* 1300g.

the imposition respectively. For this reason the blessing is an integral part of the celebration and may not be omitted, even if water or ashes are available from an earlier celebration or if the imposition of ashes follows in the setting of a Liturgy of the Word that is conducted by a deacon or an authorized layperson.[10]

b) Ritual

Here again two groups may be distinguished that correspond to some extent to those in the Missal.

Here, too, the first group includes those blessings that are wholly oriented to another part of the celebration: the blessings of the rings at a wedding and of the grave at a burial.

A second group may be regarded as made up of the blessings of water and oils during the celebration of the sacraments. Of these may be said something analogous to what was said above about the blessings of ashes and water: The meaning conveyed by the visible signs of the pouring of water at baptism, the anointing with the oil of catechumens in adult baptisms, and the anointing with the oil of the sick at the anointing of the sick, must be explained by word-signs. This is true even when water from the Easter Vigil or oil from the Chrism Mass is used, since "the element of thanks and petition" must never be absent.

2. *The Blessing of the Oils (OBO)*

a) The desire to make clear by signs the union of the faithful with their bishops (see *SC* 41) in at least one liturgy each year is the reason why the Church allows the blessing of a material needed for the celebration of the sacraments, namely, oil, not in each celebration but at a liturgy to be celebrated once a year by the bishop himself. This blessing is given within a celebration of the Eucharist shortly before Easter. As the primary minister of the sacraments within his diocese, the bishop concelebrates this Mass, in the presence of the largest possible congregation, with his presbytery, for it is by his commission that the priests are to celebrate the sacraments with the local communities throughout the year.

While the oil of catechumens and the oil of the sick may be blessed by a priest (*OBO* 7f.), the consecration of the chrism is reserved to the

[10] It must be inferred from this fact that deacon and layman may also undertake the blessings in the Ritual for baptismal water, wedding rings, and graves.

bishop alone (6).[11] But in connection with the blessings, the rubrics speak of "concelebrating presbyters" (21 and 25); thus the presbyters present concelebrate not only the Eucharist but also the blessings (see *GrH* 333). The new provision is that olive oil is no longer unconditionally required; another vegetable oil is also allowed (3). In the preparation of chrism, balsam is added to the oil (4f.).

The blessing of all the oils can take place at the point where the Eucharistic liturgy follows upon the Liturgy of the Word. But the ancient tradition of having the blessing before the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer or between the communion and the dismissal is retained, since every blessing has its origin in the Eucharist.

b) The blessing of the oil of the sick takes place, as in the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, before the *Per quem haec omnia* (20). In comparison with the Old Gelasian (see *GeV* 382), however, the text has been improved by the inclusion of brief praise before the petition.

c) The blessing of the oil of catechumens, to the extent that the use of this oil is retained, and of the chrism is allotted the place at which other blessings are given: before the dismissal. This points to the connection between the celebration of the Mass and what follows upon the Mass.

d) In comparison with its earlier form, the consecration of chrism has been very much simplified: the mixing of oil and balsam by the bishop, in case this has not already been done before the celebration (23), invitation to prayer (24), breathing on the mixture by the bishop, prayer of the bishop along with the epicletic gesture of the priests who are concelebrating the consecration (25).

Instead of the revised older text of this prayer (see *GeV* [384] 386–388), a newly formulated one may be chosen. Both texts maintain the proper relationship between anamnetic praise and epicletic petition.

3. *The Blessings in the Ritual of Blessings*

a) The Ritual begins with theological remarks on the significance of the blessing in the history of salvation (1–7) and of blessings in the life of the Church (8–15). Among the offices and ministries connected with the celebration of blessings, the first to be named is that of the community that gathers for such a celebration (16). Without the participation

[11] But capitular vicars, who were not bishops, were occasionally allowed to celebrate the Mass of Chrism: see *Not* 8 (1972) 213, 363; 10 (1974) 120; 12 (1976) 137.

of at least a few of the faithful, no blessing is to be performed (17). The primary role in the celebration of blessings belongs first of all to those to whom the leadership of the community in question belongs: bishop or, as the case may be, presbyters. Deacons can preside at some celebrations if no priest is present. At the discretion of the local Ordinary, appointed laymen (acolytes and readers) can be allowed to impart certain blessings.

But, in virtue of the universal priesthood, other laymen and laywomen can perform blessings, and this by reason of the office proper to them (parents) or because they are entrusted with some special ministry in the Church or because they have undertaken some special charge in the Church (e.g., religious, catechists). But should a priest or deacon be present, he should preside (18). The introduction then speaks of the structure of blessings, which includes a proclamation of the word as well as praise and the invocation of God (20–24); the signs that are used (extension and elevation of the hands, imposition of hands, sign of the cross, holy water, incense) (25–27); the connection of blessings with other celebrations (28–29); the preparation and planning of the celebration (31–34); and the liturgical vestments (35–38). Finally, the generous range of adaptations that are left to the episcopal conferences are explained. The most important is the possibility of publishing special books of blessings. Not everything in the Roman book has to be taken over; not everything that may be necessary in one or other country is contained in the Roman book.

b) The variety of the formularies given is to be understood in light of the different needs within a worldwide Church. The blessings are divided into five groups: blessings directly pertaining to persons, blessings for buildings and various activities, blessings of objects for liturgical use or for public veneration by the faithful, blessings of objects serving private devotion, and blessings for various needs and occasions.

For each "order" or type of blessings the liturgical book contains special introductory comments that explain the meaning of each celebration. If necessary, these remarks make it known who may preside at the celebration and how this person is to act. The formularies for official ministers and for laypersons differ, for the most part, only in the fact that they contain different greetings (there is no *Dominus vobiscum* when the minister is a layperson) and different texts of the bless-

ings. No gestures of blessing are provided for laypersons, which is strange to the extent that in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults laypersons may impose their hand at the blessings of the catechumens. In addition, the prohibition against laypersons using the sign of the cross should be reconsidered or given a different explanation. All the blessings are intended as community celebrations, with the necessary possibilities of adaptation. The word of God is given its due place; sufficient choices are provided. All the blessings contain praise of God. In blessings of objects the prayer is not over the object in question but relates to the human beings who use the object. In general, the formularies follow this pattern: introduction, reading of Scripture, responsorial song, homily, intercessions, prayer of blessing, concluding blessing and dismissal.

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The following pages list the chief or more commonly treated subjects that are pertinent to the study of sacraments and sacramentals. This index does not contain the names of persons (unless they are primary sources), events, and places recorded in this volume.

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